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Ordination Sermon.

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2 COR. 2, 14. 15.

There was war between Israel and Syria, and do what he would, every move of Benhadad, the king of Syria, and all that he planned, was immediately reported to the king of Israel. At first the king of Syria suspected one of his generals, but he was told that Elisha, the prophet of Israel, revealed to his king all the secrets of the king of Syria. Then did Benhadad declare with a thundering imprecation that he would have the head of Elisha. He sent an army to Dothan to take Elisha captive. When the servant of Elisha saw the horsemen and the chariots Benhadad had sent, he became alarmed and cried out: "Alas, my master, how shall we do?" But Elisha, never for a moment losing his composure, said to his servant: "Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." 2 Kings 6, 16.

How was it possible for Elisha to remain perfectly composed and undismayed? The very next verse explains the whole matter by telling us that Elisha *saw something* which his servant did not see. The prophet, therefore, prayed to the Lord that the servant's eyes might also be opened, so that he might see what Elisha saw, and when God bestowed spiritual sight upon the servant, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots round about Elisha. He then also saw that those who were with Elisha were more than those who were with the Syrians.

What happened there at Dothan is a picture of something that happens every day — some see only what their bodily eyes behold, and some see so much more. Some have no more than physical sight, and some have spiritual vision. Those among men who have mere physical sight like poor brute beasts see very little more than what the cattle of the field see. But there are others; there are those to

whom God gives vision, and they see more than the cattle see. They see the spiritual realities. They have the vision of St. Paul, who said: "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." 2 Cor. 4, 18. To go through life without this spiritual sight is the greatest misfortune, calamity, and curse which can befall a human being. Better be blind from your birth and have spiritual vision than to see without the aid of glasses with your physical eyes during your entire life, and never behold the things that are not seen, which are eternal! For the blindness of unbelief is delighted and entertained for a moment with the baubles and bubbles of this earth, which come and go, rise and fall, — while it fails to see the true gold of eternity, the true riches, the inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away.

I speak of this because it is so important for this occasion. If an unbeliever is here present, our whole undertaking and ceremony will seem to him in part unreasonable, in part sad and distressing, in part ridiculous. He will say to himself, What is there to celebrate and sing? Here is but a young man who has chosen a profession and intends to follow it. Perhaps he has not even chosen the profession for which he is best fitted. As yet he has accomplished nothing. Let him wait with his celebration till he finds out whether his venture will be successful or not, whether it will terminate happily or in bitter disappointment and misfortune. Another may say, This is not a glad occasion, this is a sad occasion. This young man is to go far away from home, far away from his loved ones, into a dangerous climate, among people of habits and customs wholly different from ours. Our own country is, after all, the best country on this earth and offers the most valuable opportunities to our young men, and many are pleading to be brought here to this country, begging to be permitted to live here, how foolish for any one to leave it and go elsewhere!

If we had no other sight than the sight of the unbeliever, we would judge as he judges. But thanks be unto God for having given us the vision of His Holy Spirit, and therefore we are to-night celebrating a service of triumph and of thanksgiving. To-night we all repeat the words of our text: "Now, thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ and maketh manifest the savor of His knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ in them that are saved and in them that perish."

And that we may all join in this service of thanksgiving and triumph and joy and gladness, — the young missionary who is to go forth, his grandparents and relatives, his fellow-Christians, and his brethren in office, — let us attend to these words of our text, which

call attention to those things which the eyes of the body do not see, but which must be seen by the eyes of faith if we are to triumph and our hearts are to be filled with thanksgiving and joy. Enlightened and guided, therefore, by these words of our text, let us now speak of that which they present to us:—

THE VISION OF THE MISSIONARY.

1. *He sees Christ triumphing in us.*
2. *He sees Christ triumphing through us.*

1.

St. Paul in our text gives thanks to God for the triumph of Christ in the Christians.*

We often say and teach that the Son of God came into the world to suffer and to die, to humble Himself and to become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. But His work did not end there; that was only part of His journey. Suffering and humiliation was not His final purpose. He came not to remain in suffering and death, but to *triumph gloriously*. Even the prophets of the Old Testament have spoken of this triumph of the Messiah. Isaiah says: "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied." "I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong."

'Way back in remote antiquity, more than three thousand years ago, when the Jews left Egypt and were wandering in the wilderness and came to the land of Moab, and the king of Moab, Balak, called upon Balaam to curse them, Balaam fully intended to curse the people, but as he looked down from a high hill and saw the tents and the Tabernacle of the children of Israel in the valleys, God gave him a spiritual vision, and he saw what the eyes of flesh could not see: he saw One rising out of Israel, and he declared: "He hath said which heard the words of God and knew the knowledge of the Most High, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open: I shall see Him, but not now; I shall behold Him, but not nigh. There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel and shall smite the corners of Moab and destroy all the children of Sheth." Num. 24, 16, 17. And Isaiah adds to this picture of triumph this vision, chap. 54, 17: "No weapon that is formed against Thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against Thee in judgment Thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord."

Oh, enough weapons were formed! How Satan did rage against the Lord Jesus! What weapons of deceit, cruelty, and treachery did

* Without entering upon an exegetical discussion, I have used the word *θριαμβεύειν* in the sense in which it is used by St. Paul Col. 2, 15.

he not use! But Jesus always triumphed. We will only speak of His missionary triumphs: He won Peter, He won John, He triumphed in James, He triumphed in Paul, He triumphed in Timothy, in Titus. On He has marched, on, and triumphed—in the beggar, in the wise men, in the scholar, in the prince, in the king. He divided the portion with the great and the spoil with the strong. Kings and princes in all departments of human activity were won. What a triumph when He triumphed in Luther and here in our country in the fathers, in such men as Walther, Wyneken, Buenger, Keyl, and Sihler. Every genuine believer in Jesus Christ is led in the triumphal procession of Christ Himself. Our text is taken from that picture of the Roman triumph of the victorious general who entered Rome leading in triumph all those who were taken captive, together with much of their wealth and riches. This is the cause of our thanksgiving to-night—because in this young man Christ is triumphing. Not only was he won for Christ in true faith, but he was won to devote his life that Christ may triumph in others, that the triumph of Christ may be extended. What a triumph that is for Christ and for His Church when the heart and soul of a human being has been won! Who would celebrate a triumph for winning a desert? Who wants to set up a rule over a barren waste? And what dreadful machinery of death and destruction must be employed in order to hold the conquests of war! But what a delightful triumph when the soul has been won and the heart has been gained for Christ, when it becomes true: "My sheep hear My voice," and: "Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice"! Shall we not say: "Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ"? What a triumph for the Church and for missions when we have gained a laborer to enter into mission service among the heathen, leave this country, home, friends, amid hardships and new studies and new difficulties, to serve Christ! Thanks be unto God for leading this young man captive in triumph! Thanks be unto God that Christ has triumphed in his soul!

We cannot but think of his ancestors. It is now nearly a hundred years ago when the fathers of the Missouri Synod entered into this our beloved America and began to build here the Church of the true confession. And ever since then there has been triumph upon triumph added, and even after this long span of time their children and children's children and their great-grandchildren are still serving the Lord. Here is a great-grandchild of one of those pioneers. "Thanks be unto God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ!"

2.

But St. Paul mentions another justification for our celebration, for our joy, and for our thanksgiving. He says: "Thanks be unto God, which . . . maketh manifest the savor of His knowledge by us

in every place!" We thank God not only because He triumphs *in* us, but also because He triumphs *through* us. St. Paul here illustrates what he wishes to say by speaking of an odor, a sweet-smelling savor. God has given to man the sense of smell, and He has provided in His creation odors which are very pleasing. There is the odor of the rose, of the violet, of incense. How sweet and gratifying to a hungry person is the odor of a savory meal in the preparation! God expressly also said that there are some things which are as a sweet odor or savor to Him. In the Old Testament He expressly demanded that there should be incense burned in His temple, and that the high priest was to carry this burning incense into the Holy of Holies and have the odor and the cloud of incense fill the place. All this was an emblem and a figure to show that there are some things which are very acceptable and pleasing to God. He delights, as it were, to smell them. It is pleasing to Him to note that in our heart we have *faith* and *confidence* in His Word. It is a sweet savor to Him to recognize the *love* which a Christian who believes in a crucified Savior feels for his God. It is extremely agreeable to Him and grateful to have those who believe in Him speak of Him and make known His praises. It is for this very purpose that He has chosen them out of the world, even as the Apostle Peter tells us: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." 1 Pet. 2, 9. Here in our text St. Paul speaks of this and says that through the Christians' proclamation of the virtues of Christ there is spread abroad the knowledge of God's goodness as a sweet-smelling savor to God.

All things on this earth have been created for the glory of God. Ps. 19, 1. But man, through his darkened mind and through the corruption of his heart, does not perceive the glory of God; his vision is carnal, and all his lusts are carnal; he falls in love with the creature and forgets the Creator, for whose praise and for whose glory the creature was created. But now comes the Gospel of Christ and proclaims God's glory. This must always be also our foremost desire, that God be glorified; therefore we have this as the very first petition in the Lord's Prayer, "Hallowed be Thy name." Nothing so disgraces God, nothing brings more contempt upon His holy name, than false doctrine. False religious teaching *slanders God*. True religious teaching is the highest praise of God. Where the truth of the Bible is preached and proclaimed, and God is spoken of as the wise and wonderful Creator, the Giver of every good gift, the Source of every blessing, where the Lord Jesus is lifted up as the Redeemer of the world, as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, as the only Savior of man, and the Holy Spirit is given right of way, that His Word may be proclaimed,—there God is glorified as He wishes to be glorified. And that is our

joy, that this evening we are ordaining and commissioning another one who is to go forth and glorify God where disgrace and contempt have been heaped upon God.

If one would say, You do not know as yet what will be accomplished, he must be told that we have the promises of God, and we know what they will accomplish. We Christians know all about the future, — as far as it is good for us to know it; we wish to know no more. The Word which this young man will preach will not return void. It will accomplish that which pleases God, and it will prosper in the thing whereto He has sent it. 'Tis true, he will have enemies and discouragements. Remember, my young brother, you will be in peril not only in the sea and among the heathen, but you will be in peril also among *false brethren*. Satan will lay snares for you, he will suggest discouragements; you will taste very deeply that you are "not sufficient of yourself," that "with might of ours can naught be done." Indeed, you will by and by discover that you are decreasing instead of increasing. But cling to the promises of God; pray God that He may give you and sustain for you and preserve in you the sight which sees the unseen; and though you labor and seem to be burying your labors and the fruits thereof in the ground, you should sing over their very graves: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the Law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 15, 55—57.

Remember that God has given His Church the promise: "No weapon that is formed against Thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against Thee in judgment Thou shalt condemn." Is. 54, 17. "Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel; according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought! Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion and lift up himself as a young lion; he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey and drink the blood of the slain." Num. 23, 23. 24.

Zion stands with hills surrounded,
Zion, kept by pow'r divine;
All her foes shall be confounded,
Though the world in arms combine,
Happy Zion,
What a happy lot is thine!

In the furnace God may prove thee,
Thence to bring thee forth more bright,
But can never cease to love thee;
Thou art precious in His sight.
God is with thee,
God, thine everlasting Light.

Remember that we walk by faith and not by sight. 2 Cor. 5, 7.
Is this not cause for thanksgiving and joy to know that you are going forth, — won for Christ, loving Christ, a disciple of Christ,

an ambassador of Christ,—and that you are furnished with that means which converted Saul and Luther and Timothy and Titus and the keeper of the prison at Philippi, and Tabitha and Lydia, and millions of others? And you have the guarantee of the Triune God that your work shall not be in vain. Indeed, even where men turn from your message and reward you with enmity and hatred and bitter opposition, even there your patient preaching and your firm continuance in the work of God shall be a sweet savor unto the Lord, even as He says: “For we are unto God a sweet savor unto Christ in them that are saved *and in them that perish.*” When you fail to bring in this or that soul, remember that the Lord Jesus did not win Pilate nor Caiaphas, nor the leaders of the people. And if Leo X did speak of Luther as that drunken German and Charles V declared, “That monk shall never convert me,” what of it? Luther’s preaching was to God a sweet savor nevertheless.

If you behold sights here upon earth which are discouraging, circumstances and surroundings which are disheartening, close the eyes of the body and pray God to give you the light of the spirit and the vision of eternity and of Christian faith, and remember that it is not reason and eyesight of the body that gives us the victory, but that it is “*our faith* which overcometh the world.”

Do not go forth with rosy expectations of immediate great visible results; that would be inviting bitter disappointments. What you see and hear and experience may then soon overwhelm you with discouragement and desperation. No, the battle will be fierce. We can hardly paint the picture of tribulation, sorrow, and contest in too lurid a color. Think but of what Jesus suffered, and that He said: “*The disciple is not above his master.*” Think of the sufferings of Paul and of the martyrs. But your victory, as you cling to Jesus, your Captain, is assured. We have not the least doubt concerning the outcome of God’s Word and God’s Church. Learn to say with St. Paul in the days of trouble: “We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.” 2 Cor. 4, 8, 9. And continue to labor on, to fight, and to struggle, to preach and to testify, in all things proving yourself as the minister of God. “But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God—in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings, by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the Word of Truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers and yet true; as unknown and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened and not killed; as sorrowful, yet

always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing and yet possessing all things." 2 Cor. 6, 4—10.

It is but a little while, and our day's work shall be done. One by one the baubles and bubbles of this earth shall burst and vanish. The kingdoms of this earth shall fall, crowns shall perish, thrones shall totter and tumble. Then will Christ appear to bestow His eternal crown and His everlasting kingdom upon those in whom He triumphs here on this earth. Oh, may God give you the vision of a missionary! May He lead you to see, and every day to see again, what the Word of God paints for you! Indeed, let us all join with our hearts in the words of St. Paul here in our text: "Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ and maketh manifest the savor of His knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ in them that are saved and in them that perish."

Rise, crowned with light, imperial Salem, rise!
Exalt thy towering head and lift thine eyes;
See heaven its sparkling portals wide display
And break upon thee in a flood of day.

See a long race thy spacious court adorn;
See future sons and daughters yet unborn
In crowding ranks on every side arise,
Demanding life, impatient for the skies.

See barbarous nations at thy gates attend,
Walk in the light and in thy temple bend;
See thy bright altars thronged with prostrate kings,
While every land its joyful tribute brings.

The seas shall waste, the skies to smoke decay,
Rocks fall to dust, and mountains melt away;
But fixed this Word, this saving power, remains;
Thy realms shall last, thy own Messiah reigns!

S.

Dispositionen über die neue epistolische Perikopenreihe der Synodalkonferenz.

Epistel am Sonntag Judica.

Ep h. 2, 1—10.

Unser Text redet von der Befehrung. Wichtiges Thema für jeden Menschen. Wer nicht befehrt ist, kann nicht selig werden. Joh. 3, 5: „Es sei denn“ usw. Sündeln wir darum heute

Von der Befehrung.

1. Was ist Befehrung?

Unser Text beschreibt zunächst den Zustand des Menschen vor seiner Befehrung. B. 1: „tot.“ Nicht was das natürliche Leben betrifft (der Mensch kann sich regen und bewegen, hat Verstand und

Willen, kann wählen, was er heute tun will usw.), sondern geistlich tot. Kein Fünkeln geistlichen Lebens. Erstorben wie ein Leichnam. Ein geistlich Toter vermag in geistlichen Dingen nichts, kann nichts Gutes denken, reden, tun. Von der Vollkommenheit im Paradies ist nichts mehr übriggeblieben, auch nicht ein Keim wie in einem Samenkorn. Alles tot.

Der Verstand ist verfinstert. „Der natürliche Mensch vernimmt nichts“ usw. 1 Kor. 2, 14; Joh. 1, 5. Lied 8, 2: „Unser Wissen und Verstand“ usw. Eine schrecklichere Finsternis als die ägyptische. Da kann man Jesum, den Heiland, nicht sehen, den Weg zum Himmel nicht finden und tappt schließlich in äußerster Finsternis.

Des Menschen Wille ist nur böse, 1 Mos. 6, 5; Feindschaft wider Gott, Röm. 8, 7, die auch bei ehrbaren, tugendhaften Menschen offenbar wird, wenn Gottes Wort an sie herantritt. Kein Vermögen zum Guten. Was die Welt noch als herrliche Tugenden und gute Taten eines Unbekehrten rühmt, taugt nichts in Gottes Augen. Der böse Wille bricht aus in Worten und Werken. B. 3: „taten den Willen des Fleisches und der Vernunft“. B. 1: „tot durch Übertretungen und Sünden“. B. 2: „In welchen ihr weiland gewandelt habt nach dem Lauf dieser Welt und nach dem Fürsten, der in der Luft herrschet.“ Der Teufel hat sein Werk in den Kindern des Unglaubens. Sie sind Sklaven, Sündenknechte. Satan stürzt sie in Schanden und Laster.

Folge: B. 3: „Kinder des Zorns von Natur.“ Gott ist nicht ein Gott, dem gottlos Wesen gefällt. So entbrennt Gottes Zorn über sie. Verdammt! Trauriger Zustand! Sollte auch nur ein einziger unter uns noch unbekehrt sein: Eile, errette deine Seele!

Was ist nun die Bekehrung? Nicht ein Bußkampf, den der Mensch durchkämpfen muß und wobei er bleibt, wie er ist; nicht ein Ablassen von etlichen groben Sünden, daß man aufhört zu fluchen, zu stehlen, zu huren usw.; sondern Veränderung des ganzen Zustandes des Menschen.

a. Versehung aus dem geistlichen Tod in das geistliche Leben. B. 5: „lebendig gemacht“. B. 6: „aufertvedet“. Kol. 2, 12: „auferstanden durch den Glauben“. 1 Joh. 3, 14: „aus dem Tode in das Leben kommen“.

b. Neuschöpfung. B. 10: „Wir sind sein Werk, geschaffen in Christo Jesu.“ 2 Kor. 5, 17: „eine neue Kreatur“. Joh. 3, 5: „geboren aus dem Wasser und Geist“. 1 Joh. 5, 4: „von Gott geboren“. In der Bekehrung wird das geistliche Leben, der Glaube, im Menschen geschaffen, hineingeboren. Bekehrung ist Anzündung, Schenkung des Glaubens, Versehung aus dem Stand des Unglaubens in den Stand des Glaubens, daß der Mensch nun anfängt, seine Zuversicht auf Christum zu setzen. Kol. 2, 12: „auferstanden durch den Glauben“. Apost. 11, 21: „ward gläubig und bekehrte sich“. Selige Stunde der Geburt! Ist schon die leibliche Geburt ein freudiges Ereignis, wieviel mehr die

geistliche. An die Stunde denkt der Christ oft mit Dank. Der Himmel hat sich aufgetan über ihm. Er ist nun versetzt in das Reich Gottes. Kol. 1, 12, 13: „errettet von der Obrigkeit der Finsternis und versetzt“ usw. Apost. 26, 18: „befehrt von der Gewalt des Satans zu Gott“. Sein Verstand ist erleuchtet. „Ihr waret weiland Finsternis, nun aber“ usw., Eph. 5, 8. Der Christ denkt, redet, urteilt und handelt anders als vorher; hat einen neuen Willen. Nicht daß er nun vollkommen wäre, aber der neue Mensch überwindet immer wieder das alte Fleisch. Er ist nun versetzt aus dem Stand des Bornes in den Stand der Gnade. B. 5: „selig geworden“. B. 6: „in das himmlische Wesen versetzt“. Gemeinschaft mit Christo. B. 7: „auf daß er erzeigete den überschwenglichen Reichtum seiner Gnade“. Durch seine Güte will uns Gott unaussprechlich glücklich machen. 1 Petr. 2, 10: „weiland nicht in Gnaden, nun aber in Gnaden“. Glückseliger Zustand! Kind Gottes, Erbe der Seligkeit. Leben in seinem Reiche.

2. Wie kommt die Befehrung zustande?

Nicht Menschenwerk. Dritter Artikel: „nicht aus eigener Vernunft noch Kraft“. So wenig der Mensch zu seiner leiblichen Geburt mithelfen kann, ebenso wenig zu seiner geistlichen Geburt. Ein Toter kann sich nicht selbst lebendig machen. Lazarus. Kein Keim im Menschen. Gott schenkt nicht etwa Kräfte, die der Mensch nun gebrauchen und mit denen er sich dann befehren müßte. Der Mensch kann aber auch nicht etwa das Werk, das Gott angefangen hat, vollenden. Gott führt nicht bloß bis an den Scheideweg, wirkt nicht bloß die Möglichkeit der Befehrung, sondern tut alles in allem. Die Befehrung ist gänzlich Gottes Werk. B. 5: „Er hat uns lebendig gemacht.“ B. 10: „Wir sind sein Werk, geschaffen“ usw.; nicht unser eigen Werk. B. 8: „nicht aus euch, Gottes Gabe ist es“. Das sagt die Schrift an vielen Stellen. Jer. 31, 18: „Befehre du mich!“ 1 Kor. 12, 3: „Niemand kann Jesum einen Herrn heißen ohne durch den Heiligen Geist.“ Kol. 2, 12: „auferstanden durch den Glauben, den Gott wirket“. Phil. 2, 13: „Gott . . . wirkt beide das Wollen und das Vollbringen.“ Phil. 1, 6: „Der in euch angefangen hat das gute Werk, der wird's auch vollführen.“ Lied 287, 3—5: „Daß ich nun bin befehrt, hast du allein verrichtet“ usw.

Wohl sagt die Schrift manchmal, daß die Menschen sich befehren. Apost. 26, 18. Lied 220, 1. Aber so sagt man auch von einem Schiff, daß es sich dreht, während der Steuermann es ist, der es dreht. Wohl fordert Gott die Menschen auf, sich zu befehren, aber daraus kann man nicht schließen, daß die Befehrung des Menschen Werk ist. Indem Gott dem Menschen zuruft: Befehre dich! will er selbst die Befehrung wirken.

Die Befehrung geschieht durch das Evangelium, durch die Predigt, durch Bibellesen. Röm. 10, 17: „So kommt der Glaube aus der Predigt.“ Jak. 1, 18: „gezeugt . . . durch das Wort der Wahr-

heit“. 1 Petr. 1, 23: „wiederum geboren . . . aus dem Lebendigen Wort Gottes“. Joh. 3, 5: „geboren aus dem Wasser und Geist“. Taufe. — Gott zwingt die Menschen nicht zur Bekehrung, wohl aber zieht, lockt und reizt er durchs Evangelium, stellt den Heiland und den Weg zum Leben vor Augen und erweckt so Zutrauen zu Jesu. So wird der Mensch bekehrt. Jer. 20, 7: „Du hast mich überredet.“ Röm. 1, 16: „eine Kraft Gottes, die da selig macht“.

Der Mensch kann seine Bekehrung verhindern. Apost. 7, 51: „Ihr widerstrebet allezeit.“ Matth. 23, 37: „Ihr habt nicht gewollt.“ Apost. 13, 46: „Nun ihr es aber von euch stoßet“ usw. Matth. 22, 5: „Sie verachteten das.“ Wer Gottes Wort gar nicht hört, oder wer es nur äußerlich hört, aber nicht annimmt, wie kann der bekehrt werden? Felix: „Wenn ich gelegene Zeit habe, will ich dich her lassen rufen“, Apost. 24, 25. Apost. 7, 54: „bissen die Zähne zusammen“. Pharisäer. Pain: „Meine Sünde ist größer, denn daß sie mir vergeben werden könnte.“ Wenn jemand nicht bekehrt wird, ist es seine eigene Schuld. Daraus aber, daß der Mensch seine Bekehrung verhindern kann, folgt nicht, daß er etwas zu seiner Bekehrung beitragen kann. Hos. 13, 9: „Israel, du bringest dich in Unglück; denn dein Heil stehet allein bei mir.“

Was hat Gott bewogen, den Menschen zu bekehren? Hat er etwas Gutes am Menschen gesehen, etwa einige gute Werke vor der Bekehrung? Es waren keine guten Werke da. „In meinem Fleische wohnet nichts Gutes.“ Oder hat er vorausgesehen, wie der Mensch nach seiner Bekehrung würde gottselig wandeln in guten Werken? Auch das nicht. Diese Werke des Christen muß Gott selbst zubereiten, B. 10. Die Bekehrung ist nicht ein Lohn zukünftiger Werke. Der einzige Grund: B. 4: „reich von Barmherzigkeit, durch seine große Liebe, damit er uns geliebt hat“. B. 8: „aus Gnaden“. „Es ist das ewige Erbarmen!“

3. Welches sind die Früchte der Bekehrung?

Die guten Werke. B. 10: „geschaffen zu guten Werken, daß wir darinnen wandeln sollen“. Das war Gottes Absicht bei der Bekehrung. Was sind gute Werke? Der natürliche Mensch vermag kein gottgefälliges Werk zu tun, weil alle wahrhaft guten Werke aus Liebe zum Heiland fließen müssen. Ein fauler Baum kann nicht gute Früchte bringen. Alle scheinbar guten Werke der Ungläubigen taugen nichts vor Gott. Sobald ein Mensch ein Christ wird, fängt er an, gute Werke zu tun. Der neue Mensch ist nicht müßig, dient nicht mehr der Sünde, sondern Gott und wird darin immer völliger. Daß aber ein Christ gute Früchte bringt, hat Gott gewirkt; Gott hat ihn tüchtig gemacht, gibt ihm Kraft und Vermögen, ja, hat die Werke zuvor bereitet. B. 10, noch ehe sich der Mensch damit befaßt, vor Grundlegung der Welt. Eph. 1, 4: „wie er uns denn erwählet hat, . . . daß wir sollten sein heilig und unsträflich“.

Wie steht es mit dir? Bist du bekehrt? Stehst du im lebendigen Glauben? Beweist du deinen Glauben in guten Werken? Wohl dir! Selig bist du! Bist du noch nicht bekehrt, dann schiebe deine Buße nicht länger auf! Du weißt nicht, wie lange du noch lebst. „Schaffet, daß ihr selig werdet. . . . Denn Gott ist's . . . Wohlgefallen“, Phil. 2, 12. 13.

E. E.

Erster Ostertag.

Apost. 13, 26—41.

Das größte Freudenfest der christlichen Kirche ist das Osterfest. Das bezeugen ihre Predigten, Lieder, Gebete. Und es ist guter Grund zur Freude vorhanden. Mit Recht rufen wir Christen einander heute zu: „Fröhliche Ostern!“

Die Auferweckung Jesu Christi eine freudenreiche Heilstat.

1. Denn dadurch hat Gott der Vater sich zu Christo als dem Heiland der Welt bekannt.
2. Nun wird uns im Evangelium alles Heil angeboten und geschenkt.

1.

a. Paulus redet in der Synagoge zu Antiochien in Pisidien. Zunächst führt er seinen Zuhörern zu Gemüte, wie wunderbar Gott das Volk Israel geführt und geleitet hat bis auf David, den Mann nach Gottes Herzen. Gott hatte Großes an seinem Volke im Alten Testament getan. Aber die Leitung Gottes im Alten Testament, die von Macht und Gnade zeugte, hatte ihren Zweck und ihr Ziel in der Erscheinung des großen Davidssohnes, Jesu, des Heilandes der Welt. Und in liebevoller, freundlicher, aber doch ernster Weise erzählt Paulus den versammelten Juden und Judengenossen von Christo, dem Heiland. Durch die Ankunft Pauli und seiner Genossen sei ihnen von Gott das Wort vom Heil in Christo gesandt; denn die Juden in Palästina und ihre Obersten hätten den Davidssohn nicht als den Messias anerkannt. Zuerst ein dunkles Bild: Jesus wird von den Juden in ihrer Verblendung verworfen und unschuldigerweise getötet, B. 26—29. Doch auch in diesem schwarzen Bild findet sich ein Lichtstrahl. Indem die Juden Jesum verurteilten, erfüllten sie die Schrift, B. 27, und vollendeten alles, was von Christi Leiden geschrieben war. Gerade die Umstände seiner großen Passion beweisen Jesum als den in der Schrift verheißenen Heiland. Aber ein noch herrlicherer Beweis folgte.

b. Was hat Gott aber nach dieser äußersten Verwerfung Jesu von seiten jener Menschen in Palästina für eine herrliche Tat verrichtet! B. 30. Er hat sich zu diesem Allerverachteten bekannt. Er hat ihn durch die Auferweckung von den Toten feierlich vor aller Welt als den Heiland und Messias erklärt und ihr damit kundgetan, daß er mit seinem Erlösungswerk vollständig zufriedengestellt sei. Der Stein, den die Bauleute verworfen hatten, ist zum Eckstein geworden.

c. Diese Beglaubigung Jesu ist gewiß, denn die Auferweckung Jesu ist gewiß, B. 31, durch das Zeugnis der Jünger, B. 32—37, als Erfüllung prophetischer Verheißung. Die Augenzeugen Jesu waren glaubwürdig. Sie waren ehrliche Leute. Sie waren mit Jesu von Galiläa hinauf gen Jerusalem gegangen, kannten den Herrn genau und konnten nicht leicht betrogen werden. Der Tod Christi hatte sie in so große Trauer versetzt, daß sie die Freudenbotschaft von seiner Auferstehung zuerst gar nicht glauben wollten. Aber durch seine oftmaligen Erscheinungen und durch die Worte, die er dann redete, und die Werke, die er verrichtete, benahm der Auferstandene den Jüngern alle Furcht und Zweifel und brachte sie zu der festen Überzeugung, daß er wahrhaftig auferstanden sei und lebe. Die Auferweckung Christi ist eine durch glaubwürdige Augenzeugen bestätigte historische Tatsache. Und auch Paulus und seine Mitarbeiter thesteils trieben dieselbe Predigt wie jene Augenzeugen und verkündigten ihren Zuhörern die den Vätern gegebene Verheißung, daß nämlich Gott diese dadurch völlig erfüllt habe, daß er Jesum auferweckt habe. Die Verheißung vom Heil, deren Erfüllung durch die Erscheinung Jesu begann, ist durch seine Auferweckung von den Toten vollständig geworden. Der letzte Teil der Verheißung ist erfüllt. Gott hat durch das Osterwunder der Heilungsverheißung in Christo das Siegel aufgedrückt. Jesus ist durch seine Auferweckung als Sohn Gottes erwiesen. Weil er nach der Verheißung Gottes Sohn in Wahrheit war, in dem Heute der Ewigkeit vom Wesen des Vaters geboren, so war es unmöglich, daß er vom Tode gehalten werden sollte. Wir wissen nun ganz gewiß, wer unser Heiland ist: Jesus, der Gottmensch. Und nach der Verheißung sollte der messianische Gnadenfegen, dem David verheißten, gewiß, sicher, zuverlässig sein. Und das bedingt die Auferweckung von den Toten und das Leben unsers Heilandes. Ohne Christi Auferweckung hätten wir keine Heilsgewißheit; wir müßten uns immer fragen: Ist Gott mit dem Werk unsers Stellvertreters zufrieden? Ist der göttliche Zorn gestillt, die Schuld bezahlt? Nun aber, nach Christi Auferweckung, wissen wir, daß Gottes Sohn wirklich unser Heiland und die Gnade Gottes wahrhaftig erworben ist. — Noch ein Schriftwort führt Paulus an als Beweis der Auferweckung Jesu, B. 35. Nicht von David die Rede, B. 36, sondern von Jesu, B. 37. — So ist es denn gewiß, Gott hat Christum auferweckt und somit sich zu ihm bekannt als dem göttlichen Heiland der ganzen Sünderwelt. Wahrlich, die Auferweckung Jesu ist eine freudreiche Heilstat Gottes.

2.

a. „Aus der bisher erwiesenen Auferstehung Jesu folgt nun, daß eben durch ihn, der so einzig als der verheißene Messias von Gott bewährt worden ist, die messianische Vergebung und Rechtfertigung dargeboten wird, B. 38. 39.“ (Meher.) Röm. 4, 25. Durch Christi Kreuzestod ist, wie vorhin nachgewiesen wurde, wirklich Vergebung der

Sünden erivorben. Christus hat nicht nur den Versuch gemacht, uns zu erlösen, sondern — das beweist seine Auferstehung — er hat uns erlöst. Vergebung der Sünden ist als bleibendes, sicheres Gut vorhanden und wird nun im Evangelium allen Menschen, Juden und Heiden („euch“), in Jesu Namen verkündigt und angeboten. Das Evangelium ist daher kein leeres Wort, sondern bringt den Sündern die seligen Schätze des Heils gar nahe, die durch Christi Kreuzestod beschaffte und durch seine Auferweckung besiegelte Vergebung der Sünden.

b. Und wer da glaubt, der hat Rechtfertigung und Vergebung der Sünden. Der Mensch braucht nun nichts mehr zu tun und kann nichts mehr tun, um vor Gott gerecht zu werden, da ja Christus alles für ihn getan hat. Durch das Gesetz konnte der Mensch keine Rechtfertigung von irgendeiner Sünde, sondern nur den Fluch erlangen. Aber Paulus verkündigte die freudige Tatsache, „daß von allem, wovon ihr im Gesetze Moses gerechtfertigt zu werden nicht vermochtet, in diesem jeder Glaubende gerechtfertigt wird“, R. 38 f. Vergeblich ist es, daß der Mensch sich mit Werken abquält, um den Himmel zu verdienen. Er soll dem Evangelium von Christo glauben, das Evangelium annehmen, das ihm die Vergebung der Sünden frei und umsonst anbietet, dann ist er von allen Sünden gerechtfertigt, Gottes liebes Kind und ein Erbe der ewigen Seligkeit.

Was für unglückselige Menschen sind nun die, die dem Evangelium nicht gehorchen! R. 40. 41. Sie stoßen das Heil von sich, das das Siegel Gottes trägt. Sie sind Verächter; in ihrem Tugendstolz und in ihrer Sündenliebe verachten sie das Anerbieten des gnädigen Gottes im Evangelium. Sie achten sich nicht wert der Seligkeit. Sie werden sehen und mit Schrecken sich verwundern und vor Entsetzen vergehen, wenn der Herr zum letzten Gericht erscheint. Aber auch unsere Drohung mit dem Endgericht glaubt die Welt nicht. Sie feiert trotz aller äußerlichen Freude unselige Ostern. — Wir aber wollen dem Evangelium glauben, die im Evangelium angebotene Vergebung der Sünden annehmen. Dann sind wir gerechtfertigt vor Gott und können wahrhaft froh und unserer Seligkeit gewiß sein. W. E. G.

Outlines on the First Series of Gospel-Lessons Chosen by the Synodical Conference.

Fifth Sunday in Lent.

JOHN 12, 27—36.

Those in our day who deny the vicarious atonement tell us it is contrary to the nature of God to demand that His innocent Son should be made to suffer and die for the sins of the world. But the Bible tells us the very contrary. It not only states as a fact that Christ

suffered and died *in the sinners' stead*, Matt. 21, 28; 1 Tim. 2, 6; 1 Pet. 1, 19, but that by this redemptive work of Christ *the name of God was glorified*. So our text tells us.

THROUGH THE WORK AND DEATH OF CHRIST GOD THE
FATHER HAS BEEN GLORIFIED.

For

1. *Thereby God's own will was done;*
2. *Thereby the devil was conquered;*
3. *Thereby man, the sinner, is now saved by grace.*

1.

a. God had from eternity *decreed* to send His Son to suffer and die. a. Jesus' suffering and death were *real*. "Now is My soul troubled." V. 27. Is. 53, 3—5; Matt. 26, 38. 39. 42; Mark 14, 34—36; Luke 12, 50; 22, 41—44; John 13, 21. b. *God had willed* that Jesus should suffer and die in the sinners' stead. Jesus therefore prayed: "But for this cause *came I* unto this hour." V. 27. "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" John 18, 11. Gen. 3, 15; Ex. 12, 6; Is. 53, 6. 7. 10; John 1, 29; Acts 2, 22. 23; 8, 32; 1 Pet. 1, 19. 20.

b. God *testified* that thereby His name was being glorified. V. 28. Matt. 3, 17; 17, 5. Jesus fulfilled the Father's will. John 17, 4.

2.

a. The devil, through the Fall, robbed man of the image of God and thereby of the glory which God had given man in creation. a. Man is now born in the image of his sinful parents. Gen. 5, 3; John 3, 6. b. The sinner was cast out of Paradise, Gen. 3, 22—24; comes short of the glory of God, Rom. 3, 23; and is now by nature subject to eternal damnation. Rom. 3, 19; 6, 16. 21. 23; 5, 12.

b. But the devil has been conquered, v. 31, and the image of God has been restored to man. a. Christ conquered the devil. V. 31. 1 John 3, 8; John 16, 11; Heb. 2, 14; Matt. 4, 10. 11. b. Through Christ we have now been rescued from the devil's power and kingdom and translated into Christ's kingdom. Col. 1, 13. 14; Eph. 2, 1—7. Our names are now written in heaven, Luke 10, 20, and we shall awake in the likeness of God, Ps. 17, 15; 23, 6.

3.

a. The sinner's salvation is "not of works, *lest any man should boast*." Eph. 2, 9. Man by nature "walketh in darkness" and "knoweth not whither he goeth," v. 35; cannot work out his own salvation, Rom. 11, 5. 6; cannot boast of any glory of his own, Rom. 3, 27; 1 Cor. 1, 29; Eph. 2, 9.

b. Man's salvation is *by grace*; therefore all glory for man's salvation belongs to God. V. 28. a. Salvation is the gift of God through Christ. V. 32. Rom. 6, 23; Eph. 2, 8. b. Man, therefore, can be saved only *if by faith he receives his salvation from God*. Man is translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light *by believing in the Light*. V. 36. When the jailer at Philippi asked, "What must I do to be saved? Paul did not tell him what he had to do to earn his salvation, but told him *to receive by faith the salvation procured for him by Christ*. Acts 16, 30. 31.

Application and conclusion: Let us not despise the Gospel of Jesus Christ; for it may be heard among us only "yet a little while." Let us remember that Jesus says: "This voice came not because of Me, but *for your sakes*." V. 30. The preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not an indistinct rumbling or a mere sound (some "said that it thundered"), nor the voice of a mere creature, though it were an angel uttering some "wisdom" of his own (others said, "An angel spake to Him"), v. 29; Gal. 1, 8. 9; but *the voice of the Lord from heaven*, v. 30, calling all men everywhere, v. 32, to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, the only Savior, v. 36, that in Christ and in His believers *God may be glorified*, v. 28.

Prayer: "Father, glorify Thy Son that Thy Son also may glorify Thee; as Thou hast given Him power over all flesh that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him. And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." John 17, 1—3. J. H. C. F.

Palm Sunday.

JOHN 3, 22—36.

Jesus must ever be uppermost in our minds, the thrilling and sonorous dominant of our lives. "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus only," must be our motto. To know Jesus aright, to delve ever more deeply into the sweet and holy mysteries of His person and work, to raise Him more and more above all earth-born creatures, that should be our daily concern. Blessed is the man upon whose soul the ineffable image of Christ is indelibly imprinted.

The disciples of John loved John. Rightly so, for he had been instrumental in setting their feet on the right path. The man that rescues another from the pitfalls of hell is worthy to be loved. These disciples could not bear to see John's influence waning, V. 26. But John's answer corrected their misgivings. V. 30. The sum and substance of his discourse was that Jesus is incomparably greater than he.

*JESUS IS INCOMPARABLY GREATER
THAN JOHN THE BAPTIST.*

1. *Because of His origin;* 2. *Because of His mission.*

1.

Jesus accorded John the Baptist unstinted praise, more than any person, more than John's own disciples ever uttered. Matt. 11, 7—11; Luke 7, 28. John surpassed all the prophets in greatness, was more illustrious even than Enoch, Moses, and Elijah. These men of old saw Christ as from a distance only; John, face to face.

John's origin was supernatural, because his mother, who had been sterile, bore him in her old age. Luke 1, 18. Filled with the Holy Spirit in the womb. Luke 1, 15. Leaped with exultant joy in his mother's womb. Marvelous and extraordinary. Nothing can frustrate God's dispensations of love and wisdom.

But the text maintains that John was earthly. V. 31b. His parents were flesh born of the flesh, and thus John was born in sin. He received the Spirit in a measure only. Compare v. 34b.

The origin of Jesus was supernatural in a most singular sense, none being like Christ in this respect. Jesus is coeternal with God. John 1, 1. John, who was aware of his own singular origin, humbly admits the all-surpassing greatness of Christ. John 1, 27 ("before me," *i. e.*, from eternity). John affirms the deity of Jesus also in v. 31, "from heaven," *ἐκ*, out of heaven. God alone is above all. Christ's deity is affirmed and attested by numerous and incontestable proofs.

The origin of Christ's human nature was also extraordinary in a most singular sense. Human mother, but no human father; seed of the woman, born of a virgin, of the Holy Ghost; without sin. Luke 1, 35; Matt. 1, 20. 23. He made His entrance into this world as no other creature ever did. His conception and birth have no equal in the annals of the world. Christ is greater even than John.

Christians, let us impress this truth upon our hearts. This truth concerning the divine and heavenly origin, the immaculate conception and virgin birth of Jesus Christ is bitterly and blasphemously assailed by the Modernists. These men have erased the sharp line of demarcation between Christ and all other men. They produce pagan myths and offer examples from pagan mythology to find analogies for the wonderful story of Christ's superhuman origin. But it never originated on Gentile soil; it is a revelation from God. Let us cling steadfastly to our faith as we voice it especially in the Apostles' and in the Nicene Creed. (Quote the relevant words. The Athanasian Creed might be read on this Sunday in place of one of the Scripture-lessons.) We have all reason to exult and pray: "Hosanna to the Son of David! Hosanna in the highest!" Palm

Sunday reminds us of our duty to pay homage to the King of kings. Would you be disloyal to Him?

But why was it necessary that Christ's origin should be divine and superhuman? Merely a manifestation of God's infinite power to the glory of His name? No, Christ was to be our Savior. Also because of His *mission* He is greater than John.

2.

John's mission was very essential and most important. Jesus calls him a light, *λύχνος*, lamp. John 5, 35. The prophets had foretold his coming and described his mission. Is. 40, 3; Mal. 3, 1; 4, 5. 6. John refers to it. V. 28b; John 1, 23; compare Matt. 3, 3. John baptized Christ. He was a man who was signally honored by God, who attracted wide-spread attention.

Compared with Christ, however, John was insignificant. He was a lamp, but Christ was the Light, *φῶς*. John only bore witness of the Light. John 1, 4—9. John was a burning light, and in burning it he was consumed. Christ, however, is the everlasting Light. Jesus was the Christ, the promised Redeemer of the world, v. 28; John was His servant, the friend of the Bridegroom, v. 29. John's powers were limited, for he was earthly and spoke only of earthly things, things that transpired on earth, v. 31, repentance, conversion, Baptism, forgiveness of sins. Compare John 3, 12. (HOM. MAG. 22, 174.) Jesus came out of heaven, and so His testimony springs from the clear depths of heaven. Vv. 32. 34; John 3, 11; 1, 18; 8, 26. Christ alone was sent to complete the salvation of mankind. V. 35. John could not and did not demand faith in his person, but faith in Christ. Faith in Him, he said, meant eternal life; rejection of Him, eternal death. — Christ is incomparably greater than John.

Christ, our only Savior, must be the center of our faith. He is not merely a force for good, as many other men were and are, as the liberalists claim; but by His active and passive obedience He has redeemed us from the wrath of God, from sin, death, and hell. Salvation is not merely a moral change in man, which implies that he divests himself of gross sins and leads a morally better life, as these enemies of the cross of Christ declare, but it is based upon, and proceeds from, the substitutional atonement of Christ. The message of Christ is not merely the highest expression of love, loyalty, and devotion to a cause even unto bitter death, for man to pattern after, but it brings to us the only rescue from eternal ruin. There are many saviors, or liberators, who free mankind from bodily bondage, from earthly misery, from social fetters; but there is only one Savior who saves from the chains of sin, from the power of death, from the fangs of the devil, and from the pangs of hell. There is only one Savior who has procured for us forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

Palm Sunday ushers us into Holy Week, in which our Savior laid down His life for us. As we worship Him to-day as the King of the daughter of Zion, so let us worship Him also as our only Savior, who is incomparably greater than John and all other men born of woman. In yonder world also He will be the object of our veneration and adoration, for we shall join in the mighty chorus: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." O. C. A. B.

Maundy Thursday.

MATT. 26, 17—30.

This service is to commemorate the institution of the Sacrament of the Altar, which took place the night before Good Friday, "the night in which He was betrayed," 1 Cor. 11, 23. It is a good sign that upon this occasion usually so many partake of Holy Communion; but it is not a good sign that *some* never or rarely partake of this Sacrament at any other time. This service is not to offer to Christians the one opportunity of the year to partake of this Holy Supper, but is to be devoted to a study of, and a meditation upon, this blessed Sacrament. Our text offers to guide us in this meditation to-night. Therefore, etc.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR.

1. *Its nature;* 2. *Its purpose.*

1.

a. It is not a transubstantiation. a. Roman doctrine of the Mass: "the unbloody sacrifice." b. Refutation from text and 1 Cor. 11, 26—28. (Pieper's *Dogmatik*, III, p. 347.)

b. It is neither a mere symbolical rite. a. The Reformed doctrine. (Pieper's *Dogmatik*, III, p. 354 sq.) b. Refutation from text and 1 Cor. 11, 27.

c. But "it is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ," etc. Catechism. Substantiated from text and 1 Cor. 11, 29; 10, 16. (Vide Krauth in Pieper's *Dogmatik*, III, p. 364 sq.)

Let us not sin by doubting the words of the *almighty, truthful, and wise* Lord when, face to face with death, He speaks these solemn words.

2.

a. The proclamation of the remission of sins. V. 28.—1 Cor. 11, 24 it is expressly stated: "This do ye in remembrance of *Me*." This Sacrament is not to be a mere mysterious ceremony of vain pomp and show at which the multitude is to stare, but the celebration is to serve, first, to teach the wrath of God over sin, exacting from Jesus His very body and blood; and secondly, and chiefly, it is to proclaim:

"The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin," 1 John 1, 7; and: "God so loved the world," etc., John 3, 16.

b. But whereas Jesus preached to all, He celebrated this Sacrament with His own disciples only (text), and later He had the warning added: "Let a man examine Himself," etc., 1 Cor. 11, 28. All, therefore, who wish to participate in this Sacrament should examine themselves, not as hypocritical Judas asks, "Is it I?" but as one who, because of his age and previous instruction, is enabled to examine himself honestly and properly asks himself whether he is a *penitent* sinner. For this Sacrament, while at times celebrated with a large number, is given to each individual and amounts to individual absolution — that is its purpose.

What more could God have done to strengthen the faith of His disciples, assure them of His love and favor, and win them for entire devotion to His service? May each of you obtain these blessings which God wishes to bestow upon you in this Sacrament! S.

Good Friday.

LUKE 23, 39—54.

This text is replete with contrasts. One sentence shows us Jesus at the deepest depth of humiliation and degradation; the next lifts Him up to the highest throne of heaven. The first verses tell of the deepest humiliation, even the one malefactor railed on Jesus. This low, brutish man, who by his crimes and shameful life had brought himself to this depth, yet reviled Jesus. Himself a disgrace to mankind, he yet vented his vile and blasphemous contempt upon Jesus. No one so low, he could vilify and abuse Jesus! But at once the other reproved this miscreant and acclaims Jesus the Lord of Paradise, the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

This depth of humiliation and these golden rays of divinity constitute the atmosphere of Good Friday. These are depths and heights which our minds can neither fathom nor reach, and yet we do well to gaze upon them and to accept by faith all that the precious words of this Good Friday text reveal to us upon

THE DEPTH AND THE HEIGHT OF JESUS' DEATH AND BURIAL.

1. In His Death; 2. In His Burial.

1.

a. The depth. a. The *pain* of crucifixion; b. the *disgrace* and *humiliation*. — Application: He bore it all, the deepest woe. How important for our *faith* and *love*!

b. The height. a. The loud, triumphant cry of Jesus. V. 46. (Stoeckhardt, *Passprgt.* II, 113.) b. The recognition of the centurion.

V. 47. — Application: What rays of divine and heavenly splendor! In His death He is the conquering Lord, holy and mighty. How important for our faith and *hope*!

2.

a. The depth. a. No grave of His own; how poor! No clothes; no relative of power, no riches or influence. b. The helpless corpse handled — handled by whomsoever. c. Body put away out of sight; treated against putrefaction. — Application: He suffered the shame of burial for us; how important for our faith and love! Hymn 216, 1—3.

b. The height. a. Joseph. V. 50. A man of the highest station, of irreproachable character. b. New grave. V. 53. c. No corruption. Ps. 16, 10. d. *Not a bone broken*. Ps. 34, 20. It is the Lord of glory, ruling every circumstance. — Application: How important for all who believe in this Jesus and base their hopes on Him! S.

Easter Sunday.

LUKE 24, 1—12.

Easter commemorates the greatest victory in the history of heaven and earth. (Hymns 218. 221. 223.) Yet we do not always walk as exultingly as we ought in the presence of the living Christ. Our conduct often is as though we had a dead Christ.

“WHY SEEK YE THE LIVING AMONG THE DEAD?”

1. *The question of the angels implies that the women were seeking Jesus among the dead.*

Jesus had died. V. 1. The women came to the sepulcher with spices. — The wonderful death of the Son of God. Matt. 27, 50 (cp. John 10, 18); Mark 15, 37; Luke 23, 46; John 19, 30. Witnessed by the centurion, Matt. 27, 54; Mark 15, 39; by many women, Matt. 27, 55 f.; Mark 15, 40 f.; by all the people that came to that sight, Luke 23, 48 f.; by the soldiers, John 19, 32—37. Pilate was convinced, Mark 15, 44; so were the chief priests, Matt. 27, 62—66.

Jesus was laid in the sepulcher. Matt. 27, 57—61; Mark 15, 42—47; Luke 23, 50—56; John 19, 38—42. There in the tomb, among the dead, the women were seeking the dead body of Jesus. V. 3; cp. chap. 23, 55.

Modernists are still seeking the Living among the dead. “In an unmarked grave, somewhere in Palestine, lies the dust that was once the Nazarene’s body!” With our cares and anxieties, with our fears and doubts, with our griefs and tears, we are virtually seeking the Living among the dead.

2. *The question of the angels, however, implies that Jesus is living.*

"He is not here!" V. 6. Describe the scene. Vv. 2. 3. 12; John 20, 1—8. 13; Matt. 28, 11.

Where is He? Did the disciples come and steal Him? these timid disciples? despite the formidable watch? only three days after the powerful and enraged enemies had crucified Him?—Is His dust in some "unmarked grave"? When the proclamation of the risen Christ so worried and tantalized Pilate and Caiaphas and the whole Council (Acts 5, 28), would they not have compelled the holder of the body, whether friend or foe, to produce it in order to refute the story of the resurrection?

"He is risen!" V. 6. Matt. 28, 1 ff.; Mark 16, 1 ff.; John 20, 1 ff. This timid — skeptic, vv. 9. 11. 12; Mark 16, 11. 13; John 20, 24—28 — company of disciples beheld Him. Mark 16, 9; John 20, 14; Matt. 28, 9. 10; Luke 24, 34. 13 ff.; John 20, 19. 20. 26—29; 21, 1 ff.; Matt. 28, 16. 17; 1 Cor. 15, 6. 7; Luke 24, 51; Acts 1, 9; 7, 55; 9, 3 ff. Without one dissenting voice all the disciples proclaim at the risk of their lives what they have heard and seen. Acts 2, 22—24. 32. 36; 3, 15; 4; 5, 17. 18. 40; 1 Cor. 15, 1. 4.

He lives! He is the "Living" one! "I am the Life!" John 11, 25; 14, 6. "I am He that liveth . . . alive forevermore." Rev. 1, 18.

The comfort. Hymn 229; Catechism, Qu. 163. The crowning and indisputable evidence of the truth of the Christian religion.

3. *The question of the angels demands an explanation; why, then, seek the Living among the dead?*

Does such a hopeless quest add anything to the happiness or comfort of man? Does it thrill man with the hope of life in the hour of death? Does it assure men the pardon of God? Does it offer any peace of heart or mind? What real living hope does the whole crowd of unbelieving Modernists extend? Witness the hopelessness expressed while the disciples were still seeking the Living among the dead. V. 1 ("sepulcher"; what a gloomy thing!). 4a; John 20, 11; Luke 24, 17; 1 Cor. 15, 14—19.

Then, "why seek . . . among the dead?" Is it wise? intelligent? reasonable? The mother that sulked through the cemeteries in quest of her child among the tombs when she has the positive proof and assurance that her child is at home, very much alive, has our sympathy; likewise our modern skeptics.

But "why . . .?" It is unbelief. Text, vv. 6. 7; Luke 18, 31 ff.; yet, text, vv. 10. 11; Mark 16, 11. 13. The reason why we spend one unhappy hour is that we do not "remember," that we consider the story of the ever-present and ever-living Christ "idle tales."

May this Easter-festival fully convince us that we must not seek the Living among the dead! V. 8; John 20, 20b. Then all tears will be dried, then all doubts will be dispelled, then there will be rejoicing in the tabernacles of the righteous!

Cleveland, O.

H. W. BARTELS.

Easter Monday.

LUKE 24, 36—49.

In the entire Bible nothing is taught that may be slighted or entirely neglected. But it is true that not everything in the Bible is of *equal* importance. It is certainly more important to know what the Bible says about Jesus Christ than to know what the Bible says about Doeg. — Some things which the Bible teaches are so important that we devote a large part of each year to their consideration; *e. g.*, the birth, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is of such paramount importance that he who does not know of it or does not believe it cannot have the proper understanding of anything in the Scriptures. That appears very evident from our text for to-day. Let us stop to consider this truth.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST FOR THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL.

1. *It establishes the truth of that preaching.*
2. *It constitutes the wealth and worth of that preaching.*

1.

a. The *resurrection* of Jesus Christ from the dead is historically attested beyond a doubt. Jesus Himself saw to that.

Here in our text Jesus appears to the disciples. He shows them His hands and His feet and invites them to handle Him and see. Vv. 39. 40. And when even these proofs left them trembling for joy, but hesitating, He requested something to eat and ate broiled fish and honeycomb before their very eyes. Vv. 42. 43.

From other portions of Scriptures we know of many other appearances of Jesus; indeed, of His appearance to over five hundred brethren at once, 1 Cor. 15, 6, and to His bitter enemy, Saul, 1 Cor. 15, 8.

b. If Jesus had not been raised from the dead, then the preaching of the apostles and of all who followed them in this preaching were utterly vain, aye, false and deceitful. And all who put their trust in this preaching would simply be fools and would certainly perish. 1 Cor. 15, 14. 15.

c. But if this miracle, that Jesus raised Himself from the dead, is true, then all His words are true. For He told the Jews: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," John 2, 19; that is, Kill Me, and in three days I will be alive again. Whoever can say that and then do it, thus fulfilling His own words, can do all things. His words are absolutely reliable.

Therefore also we hear here in our text how Jesus proves to the disciples from His resurrection that all the words which He spoke to them, v. 44, while He was with them, and all that are written in the

Law of Moses and in the prophets and in the psalms are reliable and trustworthy because they have been fulfilled in His resurrection.

It is therefore true: To prove the truth of the Christian religion, the truth of every Word of the Bible, we need only prove the truth of Christ's resurrection. If that is true, all is true. And it is true, and therefore all faithful Christian preaching is based upon an indestructible and impregnable foundation of truth.

2.

But the resurrection of Jesus does not only prove the truth of Christian preaching, it actually constitutes also its wealth.

a. The real loss of man is the loss of God's favor. That which makes man so utterly poor, cursed, and miserable is sin; for through sin man lost God's favor, and by losing God's favor man lost Paradise; he lost his righteousness, he lost his good sense and intelligence, he lost his character, he lost his health, he lost the world, and he lost heaven. If you were to go to an insane asylum and look at a raving maniac who tears his clothes to shreds and rags, and who is tormented with fearful visions of persecutors and imagines himself tortured by fiends, and if you were then told that this man must be kept in a bare cell, but that he might be a rich and happy man, living in a palatial home, that, however, he lost all by losing his mind, — then you would have a weak picture of man, who has lost all through sin. We might be the lords of heaven and earth, the angels our servants, and all creatures at our beck and command, while God's favor and power would have preserved to us everything. But all this has been lost through sin.

b. Jesus, however, took this sin and its curse upon Himself and promised that through His vicarious suffering and death He would rectify all, purge away our sin, remove our guilt, and return to us our original state, give us back God's favor, give us back our intelligence, give us back our character of holiness, give us back our righteousness, yes, give us heaven with its glories. And this resurrection proves that He actually made good His word; for He "was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification." Rom. 4, 25.

In order that all these spiritual riches might be bestowed upon us through the Gospel, Christ had to be raised from the dead. That, therefore, was the purpose of Jesus' resurrection, that we might be enriched for time and eternity in soul and body; that is what Jesus means here in our text, v. 47: "And that repentance and *remission of sins* should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Because His resurrection had bestowed upon Him this right, Jesus now tells His disciples, v. 49, that He will send the promise of His Father, that is, that He will endue them with God's Holy

Spirit of power. He who raised Himself from the dead now sends forth His messengers to tell the world that its sin and curse have been removed, that they also may conquer death, and that He, the victorious Lord and Savior, is willing to take them with Him to heaven and everlasting life. Job 19, 25—27; Phil. 3, 21; 1 John 3, 2; Ps. 16, 11; John 17, 24; Rom. 8, 18.

Thus the resurrection of Jesus constitutes the wealth and worth of the offer which is made in all true Gospel-preaching. Hymn 229, 1. 5. 7. 8. S.

Quasimodogeniti Sunday.

MATT. 12, 38—42.

Christ spoke these words at the close of His public ministry, near the end of the Old Testament dispensation. He had now fully and adequately revealed Himself and His divine mission. His words He had confirmed with signs and miracles. Yet: John 12, 37. The scribes and Pharisees sought another miracle, one from heaven, to attest His commission. Jesus refused to grant it. He would give them only the last and greatest sign, "the sign of the prophet Jonas"; He would warn them again of the Judgment that would surely overtake them if they persisted in their evil course.

These words apply especially now at the close of the New Testament dispensation. The Gospel of the Kingdom has been preached everywhere; the divine commission and authority of Jesus Christ has been sufficiently manifested, especially in Christendom. Yet this generation demands physical, logical proof and demonstration. What shall we do? Shall we argue, debate the matter? compromise? modify the "objectionable doctrines and features" of Christianity? remove the offense of the Cross? No. Faith cannot stand in the wisdom of man, but must stand in the power of God. Cf. 1 Cor. 2, 1—5. We must continue to preach Christ Crucified.

CHRIST CRUCIFIED THE LAST GREAT SIGN OF GOD.

1. Its character;
2. Its purpose.

1.

A. V. 38: "Master, we would see a sign from Thee." The Pharisees, unable to deny the fact that Christ performed miracles, said: v. 24. They ascribed His power to satanic possession. Christ replied: vv. 25—30. Then He warned them against committing the unpardonable sin, vv. 31. 32, and referred their hostile attitude and action to its real cause, the corrupt condition of their hearts, nature, vv. 33—37. Their blasphemy was only the natural product of their evil state. Christ's statements were morally and logically unanswerable. There-

fore they demanded a visible sign in proof of His divine mission, in a vain attempt to shift the argument from the moral to the physical realm. All the miracles He had already done were only so many signs to attest His authority. No kind of physical evidence or demonstration could achieve the purpose of His wonders, faith in Him. This is the reason why Jesus refused the hypocritical request of this "generation of vipers."

B. The sign of the prophet Jonas. He was a "sign unto the Ninevites." Luke 11, 30. See the history of Jonah. The fact that he had been three days and three nights in the belly of the whale (great fish), and that he had been sent thence to preach, they received as sufficient evidence and attestation of his divine commission. — Jonah a type of Christ.

C. The sign of Christ Crucified. V. 40b. Christ foretold His death, burial, resurrection on the third day. He would be three days and three nights "in the heart of the earth" (Hebraism for "in the earth"). His resurrection from the dead would be a divine attest of His mission. So it is indeed: —

a. To *that* generation. Christ's death and burial was public, officially certified and recorded. His resurrection was also a fact, the best attested and established in history. It was typified by Jonah, foretold by the prophets; cf. Luke 24, 25—27; Acts 17, 2, 3; 2, 27 with Ps. 16, 10 and Is. 53, 8, 10; Job 19, 25; even Gen. 3, 15. They had the evidence of the sentinels and their report, of the apostles, of the women, of the 500 disciples, of Paul. What a sign to that generation! Why did they not believe? Many were convinced, among them many priests; they saw in Christ's resurrection God's witness. The others were an evil and adulterous generation, wicked by nature, faithless to God. No sign from heaven could impart the deep sense of sin, inherited guilt, the need of salvation.

b. To *this* generation. Yes, the death and resurrection of Christ is the best authenticated fact in history. Christianity rests on it. Theory of delusion and deception absurd; discarded to-day. Falsehood and fraud incompatible with after-life, heroism, martyrdom of the apostles. Vision hypothesis also false. The *empty tomb*. The Jews could not produce the body nor silence Peter. The apostles, disciples, were unprepared for the resurrection; they did not expect it; they refused to believe until conviction was forced on them by the facts and circumstances. Thomas! Then they preached it, lived and died for it. They saw the risen Savior, talked and ate with Him, touched Him. No disembodied spirit, phantom, vision, but Christ risen from the dead. Proof, attestation, of divine person and mission. He is the Son of God and the Savior of the world. The world is reconciled to God by the vicarious sacrifice and atonement of the incarnate Son of God.

2.

A. Signs in general. Among the Jews signs were events indicating or manifesting God's will. They were divine credentials. So Moses authenticated his commission from Jehovah before Israel and Pharaoh by wonders. He was a messenger sent by God with a message and mission. He proved it by doing a work of Almighty God. In the nature of things such evidence was justified, was therefore granted by God. Hence, Elijah also performed miracles. The purpose, of course, was to engender faith, confidence, in the messenger, prophet, to the end that his message might be accepted as coming from God and to be acted upon.

B. The sign of Jonas. Repentance was the purpose. Nineveh was a great, but wicked city. Its wickedness came up before God. So God had to reform or overthrow the city. He sent Jonah with the message: "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." The people should repent, turn from their evil ways. They did so. The king proclaimed a fast by public decree, repented in sackcloth and ashes. The people likewise. They cried mightily to God for mercy. They repented. And God spared the city for the time being.

C. The sign of Jesus Christ. The purpose was repentance and faith in Jesus:

a. *Then.* a. They were a wicked and adulterous generation. Their condition and relation to God was at fault. Their very nature was corrupt; they were as a corrupt tree bearing corrupt fruit. Vv. 33—37. They must see and acknowledge and rue their inherited sin and guilt, their hopeless condition. They must see their need of salvation. — b. They must believe in Jesus. They must see in Him their God and Savior, the Messiah, the fulfilment of prophecy and type. — c. If they did not, God would overthrow, destroy them. They were worse than the men of Nineveh. These repented at the word of Jonah. Therefore they would rise in judgment against them, not only in mute witness, but to condemn them. Jesus is more, greater, than Jonas. The latter but a sinful man, although the messenger of God; the former the Lord Himself from heaven. The latter, only God's instrument; the former, speaking of His own accord. The former performed no miracle before the men of Nineveh; the latter performed many miracles; the greatest: He rose from the dead. Yea, the Queen of Sheba would rise on the Day of Judgment to condemn them. One authentic report sufficed to bring her from afar. She felt the need of greater wisdom and desired to obtain it. She came, heard, believed. In Christ is the great Reality, the divine Source of all wisdom, of salvation. If they did not believe, she would condemn them. Christ is greater than Solomon. Solomon spoke by the Spirit of Christ. Jesus is God Himself; His Word is the everlasting truth.

b. *Now.* The present generation is also evil and adulterous. Wise in their own conceit, most men do not realize their true condition, need of redemption and salvation. They must repent, believe in Jesus Christ — the last great sign of God.

Consequently we must continue to preach Christ Crucified to the end of the world. If men will not believe, God will overthrow, destroy them, as He judged Jerusalem and its people. Men may deny, oppose; but Christ did rise from the dead and now sits at the right hand of Power. Soon He will appear to judge the world. God grant that we may stand before Him on that day! Amen.

Columbia, Pa.

JOHN G. SOHN.

Entwürfe zu Passionspredigten.

(Auf Beschluß einer Konferenz eingesandt von E. Ulrich t.)

5.

Joh. 19, 25—27.

Mit Ausnahme der Maria von Bethanien, die noch vor dem eigentlichen Leiden Jesum gesalbt hat, hat keins der Weiber, die in der Passionsgeschichte bisher genannt wurden, uns rechte Freude gemacht; denn sie standen nicht auf Jesu Seite. Wenigstens werden sie nicht als Jesu Anhänger geschildert. Die noch übrigen erfreuen unser Herz; denn sie sind gläubige Jüngerinnen. Obenan steht die Mutter Maria. Ihr Bild ist mit der Erlösungsgeschichte eng verknüpft, von der Empfängnis an. Wir achten sie, freilich nicht wie die Römischen, die sie als unbefleckt verehren und vorgeben, sie sei lebendig gen Himmel gefahren. Wir bleiben bei der Schrift, die uns heute das letzte von ihr erzählt — ein liebliches Bild:

Maria, die Mutter Jesu, unter dem Kreuz.

1. Sie stand da und sah Jesu Leiden.
2. Jesus, am Kreuz hängend, sieht ihre Leiden und versorgt seine Mutter in Liebe.

1.

a. „Es standen . . . Mutter.“ Nicht sie ist am Kreuz, sondern Jesus leidet; aber sie sieht alles. Kurzer Hinweis auf seine Leiden von Gethsemane bis Golgatha. Maria sieht, wie die andern ihn neugierig begaffen, spöttisch über ihn reden; wie eben die Kriegsknechte die Kleider theilten; wie er zwischen zwei Übeltätern hängt, als ob er auch ein Verbrecher wäre, ja der schlimmste unter ihnen. Das war Leiden für Jesum, aber auch Schmerz für Maria, denn er war ihr Sohn, nicht nur gut und gehorsam, sondern sündlos, ihr lieb als ihr Fleisch und Blut, noch lieber als Sohn Gottes. Er war zuletzt auch ihr Versorger und Beschützer gewesen. Sah die Wittve zu Nain ihren

Sohn mit Schmerzen scheiden, dieser Wittve unterm Kreuz tat es weher, daß ihr Sohn ihr so schändlich genommen wurde; mußte die Schande doch auch auf sie zurückfallen. Und sie kann ihm nicht helfen; der einst an ihrer Brust gelegen hat, muß über Durst klagen, und sie kann ihn nicht stillen. Jesus hat von dem großen Schmerz der Mütter von Jerusalem geredet, aber welche Mutter hat je ihr Kind schwerer leiden sehen, als hier Maria ihren Sohn leiden sah?

b. Da hat sich Simeons Wort erfüllt, Luk. 2, 35. Jesus ist ein Zeichen, zum Widerspruch gesetzt. Hier wollte man ihn nicht als König der Juden nach Pilatus' Überschrift gelten lassen. Welcher Spott unterm Kreuz! Jedes Wort ein Stich in Marias Seele! Auf ihr Kind hatte sie nicht nur mütterliche, sondern göttliche Glaubenshoffnung gesetzt; mit diesen Hoffnungen schien es aus zu sein: Jesus sollte als Übeltäter sterben. Der Spott, die Nägel, der Speerstich, das ganze Kreuz mit seiner Schwertform — lauter schmerzliche Stiche, so daß ihr Mutterherz blutete.

c. Eva stand einst unter einem Baum, die verbotene Frucht stach ihr ins Auge; der Baum war lustig anzusehen. Dieses Stehen und Schauen hatte die Folge, daß Evas Töchter, ja das ganze Menschengeschlecht im Elend sich sehen, daß hier Maria den häßlichen Kreuzesbaum schauen muß. Der damals geweissagte Felsenstich bereitet ihr einen Schwertstich. Doch nicht sie leidet für uns, sondern Jesus allein; sie darf aber bei dem Kreuz stehen; er ist ihr Heiland, ja aller Menschen Erlöser.

d. Wir lesen nicht, daß Maria in ihrem Schmerz sich gebärdete wie eine Verzweifelte: „Ihr Verge, fallet über uns!“ Nein, sie stand; sie fiel nicht um oder raufte ihr Haar. Ihr Glaube hielt sie aufrecht; Gottes Kraft erhielt sie. So ist Maria ein liebliches Bild neben dem „lieblichen Bild, schön zart und mild, dem Söhnlein der Jungfrauen“. Maria soll das Bild sein der Kirche Gottes auf Erden. Keiner soll sein heißes Blut sonder Neu' anschauen; sein Leiden soll wie ein Schwert durch unsere Seele dringen; denn wir haben das verschuldet. Wir sollen nicht am Kreuz hangen, aber im Glauben unter dem Kreuz stehen. Mit Schmerz müssen wir ihn leiden sehen, ja selbst leiden. „Wer da will . . . Kreuz auf sich . . . nach.“ Aber Jesus gibt reichlich Trost in Schmerz und Leid.

2.

a. „Da nun Jesus . . . zu sich“, B. 26 f. Jesus sieht seine geliebte Mutter, ihre Schmerzen und Sorgen. Voll Liebe versorgte er sie noch. „Siehe, . . . dein Sohn!“ sagt er zu ihr. „Siehe, . . . deine Mutter!“ sagt er zu Johannes, seinem lieben Jünger, der sie auf der Stelle annahm. So genießt sie Liebe, Trost und Fürsorge von ihrem Sohn im Alter.

b. Christus leidet selbst am schwersten; doch hat er Mitleid mit den andern: mit den klagenden Weibern; mit den Kreuzigern: „Vater,

bergib ihnen . . . tun“; hier mit seiner Mutter. Er denkt nicht an seine Leiden, sondern an diejenigen der Seinen. O dies liebende Heilands-herz! Wie hat er dann schon an uns gedacht! Er hat sein Leben nichts geachtet, nur in Liebe auf uns gesehen. „Daß wir würden losgezählet, hast du wollen sein gequälet.“ Und wenn damals schon, wieviel mehr jetzt, da er frei ist, auf dem Thron seiner Herrlichkeit, wird er uns sehen, barmherzig sein! — Hat er im Leiden an so Geringes, an irdische Versorgung, gedacht, so wird er jetzt nicht nur an unsere irdische, sondern auch an unsere ewige Versorgung denken; er wird uns nicht Waisen lassen, sondern uns einen gnädigen Vater im Himmel, eine Heimat droben zuweisen, durch sein Leiden verdient. Er will diejenigen, die ihm nachfolgen und dabei verlassen sind und leiden müssen, gut versorgen. Er tut es gern durch Menschen, die er liebhat und die ihn lieben. Willst du gern den Wunsch deines sterbenden Heilandes erfüllen, so laß deine Eltern nicht Not leiden; nimm von Stund' an dich aller derer an, die um Christi willen leiden; das ist ebenso, als wäre es ihm getan.

6.

Luk. 23, 49—56.

„Dieser ist gesetzt zu . . . offenbar werden“, sagt Simeon. Jesus am Kreuz ist jenes Zeichen; an Christo müssen aller Herzen Gedanken offenbar werden. „Wer nicht mit mir . . . mich.“ Das zeigte sich schon an den beiden Schächern. Jeder Mensch wird ein Teilnehmer am Kreuz und Leiden Jesu: die einen, indem sie ihn verraten, schlagen usw.; die andern so, daß sie bei seinem Kreuze stehen, seine Blut- und Schweiß-tropfen abwischen, ihn begraben helfen — im Glauben ihn anschauen.

Die gläubigen Weiber als Teilnehmer an der Passion Jesu.

1. Sie schauen seinem Leiden zu.
2. Sie helfen seinen Leichnam begraben.

1.

a. Nicht bloß mitleidige, aber ungläubige Weiber aus Jerusalem sind mit Jesu nach Golgatha gezogen, sondern nebst der Mutter Maria noch etliche Weiber aus Galiläa, von denen einige mit Namen genannt sind: Maria aus Magdala, von welcher Jesus sieben Teufel ausgetrieben hatte; Maria, des Kleophas (Ostergeschichte) Weib; Maria, die Mutter des kleinen Jakobus; Salome, auch manchmal Maria genannt, die Mutter der Kinder Zebedäi, also des Johannes, der auch bei Jesu Kreuz stand. Dazu andere Jüngerinnen aus Galiläa, die Jesu bis nach Jerusalem, bis ans Kreuz, bis zum Tode getreu, nachgefolgt waren. Wie der Maria von Bethanien die Salbung, so wird diesen Weibern die Handreichung nachgerühmt. Sie haben wohl Jesum mit Speise und Kleidern versorgt (vgl. Luk. 8, 3), von jeher ein passendes

Werk frommer Frauen (Sunamitin, Witwe zu Jazpath), daß sie geistlichen Lehrern dienen.

b. Wie sie in seinem Leben dem Herrn gedient haben, so wollen diese Weiber zu seinem Dienst ihm auch im Sterben nahe sein. Zunächst können sie nur stille Teilnehmer sein wie die Mutter Maria. Sie schauen Jesu Leiden auf Golgatha (Aufzählung der letzten: Schmähung, Finsternis, Verlassensein). Zuletzt sehen sie, wie er unter wunderbaren Umständen stirbt; sie hören das Bekenntnis des Hauptmanns, sehen das Öffnen der Seite mit dem Speer.

c. Sie „stehen von ferne“, nicht aus Furcht (dann wären sie gar nicht dagewesen); sie sind mutiger als die Jünger. Sonst ist Frauen-natur schwach, sie können selten Wunden und Blut ansehen. Diese sehen alles voll Teilnahme. Auch ihnen ist es wie ein Schwert durch die Seele gegangen. — Wer an Jesum glaubt, den nimmt er nicht nur mit nach Jerusalem, wo man ihm zujubelt, sondern auch mit nach Golgatha, wo das Volk spottet, wo Christus leidet. Wem Jesus erst als Heiland hilft, der soll ihm wieder helfen mit Handreichung; für den geht es ohne Kreuz nicht ab. Wohl leidet Jesus alles für uns, rettet uns, aber wir alle, auch von Natur schwach, sollen mit ihm leiden, durch Glauben und Liebe recht stark gemacht werden.

2.

a. Hier haben wir das letzte Stück der Passionsgeschichte: das Begräbnis Christi. Die Weiber selbst haben das nicht besorgt. Sie hätten es tun dürfen. Jesum kreuzigen, war Sünde, ihn begraben, war nicht Sünde. Die Männer begruben ihn, die Weiber taten dabei Handlangerdienste. Kurze Schilderung des Begräbnisses in Josephs Garten. Zuletzt sehen sich die Weiber noch alles genau an, dann gehen sie heim, um nach dem Gesetz am Sabbat zu ruhen, selbst von der lieben Arbeit, Jesum zu salben. Gleich nach dem Fest wollten sie die Salbung vollenden.

b. Damit ehren sie Jesum: Durch ihre Gegenwart bei seinem Leiden, durch ihr Gefolge bei seinem Begräbnis; da erweisen sie ihm „die letzte Ehre“. Jesus, in Schmach gestorben, die seine Feinde ihm angetan haben, ist doch von den gläubigen Frauen still geehrt worden. Das gereicht ihnen zur Ehre. Die Jünger, die Treue geschworen haben bis zum Tod, fehlen; die schwachen Weiber dagegen sind da. — Durch ein Weib ist die Sünde in die Welt gekommen, aber die Passionsgeschichte zeigt, „hie ist nicht Mann noch Weib, denn ihr seid allzumal einer in Christo Jesu“. Weiber sind Miterlöste, Miterben Christi; ja sie haben oft größeren Glauben, mehr Liebe und Beständigkeit bewiesen als männliche Jünger Jesu. — Zwar auch dem Glauben dieser Weiber haftete Schwachheit an: sie glaubten nicht an die Auferstehung am dritten Tage, sonst hätten sie nicht an das Salben gedacht. Jesus übersieht das und ehrt sie damit, daß ihnen die erste Kundschaft von seiner Auferstehung und seine erste Erscheinung am Ostermorgen zuteil wird.

c. Heißt es von den Weibern: „Sie waren stille nach dem Geseß“, so ist das durch Christi Erlösung anders geworden. Nicht nach dem Geseß, sondern nach dem Evangelium dürfen wir alle ruhen. Sie mußten erst arbeiten, dann ruhen; wir ruhen erst in der Gnade Jesu, dann dienen wir. — Wie sie Jesu Grab schmücken, so schmücken wir unsere Gräber als Ruhestätten. — Alle, Mann und Weib, mögen Jesum als Heiland ehren in seinem Leiden, ihm glauben, mit ihm leben, mit ihm sterben, bis dahin ihm dienen durch Handreichung, zum Dank als selige Teilnehmer seiner Leiden. E. U l b r i c h t.

Dispositionen über die sieben Sendschreiben.

Viertes Sendschreiben.

Offenb. 2, 18—29.

Der Herr der Kirche führt sich bei dieser Gemeinde ein als der Sohn Gottes, der Allerhöchste, als königlicher Richter, der alles schaut, erschaut und durchschaut, auch die Finsternis, und dessen Zorn entbrannt ist, der ein furchtbar vernichtendes Strafgericht abhalten wird mit seinen Feinden, auch in den Gemeinden. Er wird sie mit glühenden Füßen zertreten. Das sagt er der Gemeinde zu Thyatira, um damit gleich anzudeuten, daß er im Zorn mit ihr reden wird. In dieser Gemeinde finden wir die Greuel von Pergamus in „vermehrter und verböselter Auflage“. So höret denn in ehrerbietigem Aufschauen zu dem Herrn Herrn

Des Herrn Botschaft an die eine Teufelsprophetin duldenbe Gemeinde zu Thyatira.

1. Schrecklich steht es in dieser Gemeinde.
2. Furchtbare Strafe wird über sie kommen.
3. Doch Langmut wird er den Treuen erzeigen.

1.

a. B. 19. Die eigentliche Gemeinde. Das ist die Gesamtheit der wahren Christen zu Thyatira, die Herzensgläubigen. Diese waren fleißig in allen guten Werken; übten sich in der Liebe zu Gott und dem Nächsten, auch gegen ihre Feinde; waren eifrig, Gottes Wort zu hören und auszubreiten; hielten Glauben in schwerer Verfolgungszeit; ertrugen alle Leiden in Geduld — und dies alles je länger, je mehr. Es war dort eine feine Christengemeinde entstanden und hatte sich mehr und mehr erbaut zu einer Behausung Gottes im Geist. — Das gilt von allen Heiligen Gottes in jeder Ortsgemeinde. Diese sind in Gottes Augen die Gemeinde. Die andern haben sich ihnen angehängt wie der Dreck ans Wagenrad; sind das Unkraut unter dem Weizen. Gott sei Dank, daß nach der Zusage des Herrn diese Heiligen Gottes

in jeder Ortsgemeinde, wo das Evangelium gepredigt wird, vorhanden sind, wenn es auch nur zwei oder drei sind! Sonst müßte der „Engel der Gemeinde“ verzweifeln.

b. B. 20. Die Teufelsprophetin. Eine Isebel, gleich in jedem Stück jener alttestamentlichen, 1 Kön. 21, 25 (man erzähle von ihr), war in dieser Gemeinde aufgestanden und gab vor, eine Prophetin zu sein, neue Offenbarungen erhalten zu haben. Sie hatte aber nicht den Heiligen Geist, sondern den unsauberen Geist der Hölle. Sie lebte in den „Tiefen Satans“ und zog die Kinder Gottes in diese satanischen Tiefen mit hinein. Sie lehrte Hurerei und Gözenopfer als höhere Stufe des Christentums, als hohe, wichtige, verborgene Geheimnisse. Sie lehrte, wie die Nikolaiten, Fleischesbrunst müsse durch Befriedigung derselben überwunden werden; so nur werde man der sündlichen Brunst frei. Welche Teufelei! — Da es aber Fleischesreligion war, so fielen ihr viele in der Gemeinde zu, um, wie sie sagten, dieser Sünde satt, überdrüssig, zu werden und endlich kein Verlangen mehr danach zu haben! So könne man die Heiden für das Christentum schnell gewinnen! — Verführer zu solchen Greueln gibt es in vielen Gemeinden. Das sind Teufel in Menschengestalt — Versucher, Verführer. Sie locken und reizen, besonders junge Christen, die dem Teufel und seinem Werk und Wesen zweimal feierlich abgesagt haben, in die Tiefen Satans. Und viele fallen ihnen zur Beute. Mit den „unschuldigen“ (?) Tänzchen fängt es an; da wird die natürliche Lust zur Brunst zur Fieberhitze gesteigert. Kein Wunder, daß dann so viele in Hurerei fallen! Hat doch der Teufel auch Mittel an die Hand gegeben, Schwangerschaft zu verhüten und so den sichtbaren Folgen vorzubeugen, die Sünde vor Menschenaugen zu verbergen. Auch derartige Mittel werden von solchen Gliedern angewendet. Tiefen Satans!

2.

a. B. 21. Die Gnadenfrist. Der Herr hatte auch mit diesem Teufelsweib Geduld; er wollte sie retten aus den „Banden der Finsternis“. Er ließ sie ernstlich warnen und zur Buße rufen. Aber sie ließ sich nicht von ihrer Teufelslehre, nicht von ihren Greueln. Sie war „verkauft, nur übel zu tun“, 1 Kön. 21, 25. Satan hielt sie auf „dem Bett der Wollust“, zeigte ihr immer neue Tiefen der Unreinigkeit. — Wie warnen doch alle treuen Pastoren mit Flehen und Tränen diese Lustdiener in Predigten und Beichtanmeldungen, ja schon — vorbeugend — im Konfirmandenunterricht. Aber ach! so viele hören nicht. Es ist so schwer, gerade von dieser Sünde loszukommen, wenn jemand ihr verfallen ist. Der Teufel hält solche Menschen ans „Lustlager“ gefesselt. Jesum, der sie freimachen kann, haben sie verworfen; gegen den Heiligen Geist, der an ihnen mächtig arbeitet, verstoßen sie sich. Sie wollen in der Sünde bleiben, weil es dem Fleisch gefällt, obgleich ihr Gewissen von Zeit zu Zeit schreit: Du bist ein verdamnter Teufelsknecht!

b. V. 21. Die Sünde der Gemeinde. Du läßt dies Satansweib gewähren, meine Knechte zu verführen. Du läßt die Sünde, obgleich sie so offenbar ist, daß sie gen Himmel schreit und stinkt, weiter zu, immer mehr ihr verfallen. Du tust nicht hinaus, was so offenbar böse ist. — Das Blut dieser Menschen klebt an euren Händen, weil ihr das ungestraft hingehen laßt, wenn gleich ihr euch nicht daran beteiligt. Von euch muß ich das Blut dieser Menschen fordern! — Was tut unsere Gemeinde gegen solche Verführer bisher unschuldiger Mädchen und Knaben? Was tun wir gegen das Tanzunwesen, wodurch, wie die Polizei und Richter bezeugen, 90 Prozent aller Gefallenen zu Fall gekommen sind? Geht die Gemeinde bis zum Bann?

c. V. 22. 23. Die gerechte Strafe. Hier wird dieser Prophetin und ihren Anhängern das Urtheil gesprochen, und bald wird es der Herr ausführen — hier schon. Von ihrem Bett der Wollust will der Herr sie auf ein Bett der Qual werfen wegen der begangenen Greuel, Spr. 7, 16; Amos 6, 4. Schreckliche Schmerzen soll sie ausstehen. Aber auch die, welche mit ihr gehurt haben, sollen samt den Hurenkindern umkommen. Sie sollen ihrer Kinder beraubt werden. So will der Herr ein Exempel seiner Strafgerechtigkeit statuieren, das allen Gemeinden bekannt werden soll, nämlich zur Warnung. Sie sollen daran erkennen, daß der Herr Herzen und Nieren prüft, die Lüste wohl kennt und unbußfertige Sünder zu seiner Zeit nach gewährter Bußfrist hier und dort furchtbar strafen wird; daß er ein eifersüchtiger Gott ist, der die Sünde der Väter und Mütter heimsucht an den Kindern bis ins dritte und vierte Glied. — Das tut der Herr noch heute. Er straft die Hurer mit ekelhaften, qualvollen Krankheiten. Junge Leute, fragt euren Arzt, wenn ihr mir nicht glauben wollt! Auch die Kinder müssen büßen für die Hurensünden der Eltern. Oft sterben sie frühzeitig eines jämmerlichen Todes. Sie tragen ein furchtbares zerstörendes Gift in sich. Gott ist noch heute ein schneller Zeuge wider die Hurer und Ehebrecher. O hört doch, die ihr Ohren habt zu hören! Laßt ab von euren Sünden, ehe es zu spät ist! „Irrt euch nicht, Gott läßt sich nicht spotten!“ Lied 229, 3.

3.

a. V. 24. Die gnädige Schonung der Treuen. Diese haben sich veründigt, indem sie jene Teufelsprophetin gewähren ließen und einen solchen Pfühl der Unreinigkeit in ihrer Mitte duldeten. Sie sollen das reumütig bekennen, es sich leid sein lassen; dann will der Herr nicht auf sie werfen eine andere Last (Strafe) als diese Strafrede und die sich aus der Schande von selbst ergebenden Folgen für die Gemeinde. Er will Langmut üben und es ihnen als Schwachheitsünde, als Mangel an Erkenntnis, vergeben. Ja, gütig und barmherzig ist der Herr, geduldig und langmütig. Die Treuen werden, nachdem sie ihr Unrecht erkannt haben, in ihrer lagen Zucht nicht verharren, sondern die Bösen hinaustun. — Bisher hat der Herr auch an uns so gehandelt.

Seine Barmherzigkeit ist es, daß es nicht längst schon aus ist mit unserer Gemeinde. O wieviel haben wir in lazer Gemeindegucht versäumt und dadurch Blutschulden auf uns geladen! Wollte der Herr all das Blut von uns, den sonst im Glauben Treuen, fordern, wir würden vergehen müssen. Gott sei uns Sündern gnädig!

b. B. 25—29. Die Lockende Verheißung. Haltet, was ihr in mir habt, bis ich komme mit einem seligen Stündlein oder dem Jüngsten Tag! Ihr sollt reichlich entschädigt werden für alle Schmach und alle Leiden, die ihr um meinetwillen erduldet habt. Der Herr will uns zu Mitregenten über alle Völker machen; wir sollen mit ihm alle seine Feinde richten, Ps. 2. Als überwindest will der Herr uns vor aller Welt herrlich halten. Nach der Nacht der Trübsal soll uns der Morgenstern, das Himmelslicht, das der Herr durch sein Blut für uns erworben hat, werden. Hört, was der Geist unserer Gemeinde heute gesagt hat! (Lied 282, 2. 3.)

N. Piehler.

Fünftes Sendschreiben.

Offenb. 3, 1—6.

B. 1. Wiederum führt sich der Herr auf höchst feierliche Weise auch bei dieser Gemeinde ein. Er hat die sieben Geister Gottes, ist mit dem Heiligen Geist gesalbt ohne Maß; alle verschiedenen Gaben und Segnungen des Heiligen Geistes liegen in ihm beschlossen. Er hat auch die sieben Pastoren der Gemeinden in seiner Hand; sie sind seine Diener. Ihm allein sollen sie leben, sich aufzehren; ihm müssen sie Rechenschaft geben über ihren Dienst und über den Zustand der Gemeinde, die er ihnen befohlen hat, daß sie achthaben auf sich selbst und auf die Herde wie auch auf die Lehre. Ist der Pastor mit schuld an dem Verderben der Gemeinde, durch Lathheit in Lehre und Seelsorge, so will der Herr das Blut der Verlorenen von seiner Hand fordern. Denn er hat ihn zum Wächter gesetzt. In der Gemeinde zu Sardes, im Lande Lydien, sah es überaus erschrecklich aus.

Das Sendschreiben an die geistlich tote Gemeinde zu Sardes.

1. Das kurze, scharfe Urtheil.
2. Die überaus ernste Warnung.
3. Die herzbewegende Aufforderung zur Treue.

1.

a. B. 1. Die Namenchristen. Der Herr läßt sich nicht durch äußeren Schein narren und betrügen. Er weiß die Werke der Glieder dieser Gemeinde. Glaubenswerke sind es nicht, darum auch nicht aus Liebe zu ihm verrichtet. Heuchelwerke wie die der Juden, leerer Schein! Wohl hatte die Gemeinde den Namen, daß sie lebe; sie hatte einen guten Namen bei den umliegenden Gemeinden. Man nannte sie „lebendig“,

stellte sie andern als Vorbild hin. Ihr Pastor war ein vielbenedeter Mann. Mit den Finanzen stand es vortrefflich; alles wurde aufs systematischste betrieben. Das soziale Leben stand in hoher Blüte. Es ging äußerst lebhaft zu; es war eine „rührige“ Gemeinde. Andere suchten ihr nachzueifern. — Welch ein getreues Bild vieler Gemeinden unserer Zeit! Blickt auf die Sektengemeinden! Lest, was die kirchlichen Zeitschriften und die weltlichen Zeitungen an ihnen zu rühmen haben: große eingeschriebene Seelenzahl, einen prachtvollen Tempel, eine wunderschöne Gemeindehalle, sanitäre Küche und alle möglichen Einrichtungen für geselliges Leben, große Schaubühne, einen Wandelbildersapparat: alles — bis zum spiegelglatten Tanzsaal! Das Vereinswesen steht in Blüte; eine Menge Komiteen sind an der Arbeit; das Finanzwesen ist aufs beste geordnet; die soziale Arbeit floriert. Welch eine Vielgeschäftigkeit, welches Leben! Ihr Pastor ist hochberühmt, und die Gemeinde hat einen guten Namen in der Gegend und in ihrer eigenen Kirchengemeinschaft. Wohl eine Gemeinde, aber wie die zu Sardes! — Gibt es solche Gemeinden auch in unserer Synode, die äußerlich, vor Menschenaugen, so hoch, so „lebendig“ dastehen? Vieles jekt Gesagte sollte sich in allen Gemeinden finden, z. B. ein reges Gemeindeleben; aber es muß anders sein als dasjenige zu Sardes und in vielen Gemeinden unserer Zeit. Wenn die Hauptsache fehlt, der vor Gott geltende Kern, dann ist all das Gleißende schrecklicher als nichts, Gott ein Greuel, bloßes Namenschristentum, Formensache, Heuchelei!

b. B. 1. „Du bist tot!“ Schrecklich, was der Herzenskündiger hier urteilt! Diese so lebendig scheinende Gemeinde war geistlich tot, ja tot! Es war Leben in der Gemeinde, aber nicht das Leben aus Gott, aus dem Glauben, aus der Liebe. Der alte Adam war geschäftig; denn das alles kann der auch tun; und dann, wie fromm sieht er doch dabei aus, der alte Heuchler! Der Herr urteilt also, daß in der Gemeinde zu Sardes der große Haufe nur Namen-, nur Scheinchristen sind. Er wird es wohl wissen! Nur Werke im Glauben (Mat., Jr. 180) sind gottgefällig. Der wahre Glaube, aus welchem die Liebe als Kennzeichen fließt, macht Kinder Gottes, verleiht in die Gemeinde der Heiligen ein. Mag alles andere, sonst Schöne und Lobenswerte in einer Gemeinde im Schwange gehen, fehlt der Glaube, der lebendige Glaube, so sieht Gott nicht gnädiglich an Rain und sein Opfer. Es ist ja nur der Schein der Gottseligkeit, aber seine Kraft verleugnen sie. Namenschristen sind Tote in Gottes Augen. Wehe, es gibt Selbstbetrug! — Von wie vielen Gemeinden unserer Synode mag wohl der Herr, der Mehrzahl der Glieder nach, auch so urteilen! Ist nicht gar vieles in unserm Gemeindeleben auf den alten Adam eingestellt? Ist nicht die Vielgeschäftigkeit, das Interesse am größten, wenn es gilt, dem alten Adam einen großen, guten Tag zu bereiten? Wird nicht viel mehr für Unterhaltungen als für das Seelenheil gearbeitet? Ist nicht der Zu-

lauf am größten, wenn es gilt, den Augen und dem Fleisch Lust zu bereiten? Vergleiche Bibellassen, Gottesdienstbesuch und Unterhaltungen! Wann ist die Halle gefüllt? Arten nicht die Unterhaltungen unter uns schon in weltliche Theater aus? Sagt man nicht schon unter uns, man müsse vieles zulassen, um die Leute bei der Kirche zu erhalten? Gottes Wort tut es also nicht mehr! Ist es nicht schrecklich, die Welt in der Kirche zu organisieren, um den Haufen zusammenzuhalten? Was ist gewonnen, wenn man den Leuten in der Kirche bietet, was die Welt hat? Ist es nicht besser, man läßt die Verlorengehenden außerhalb statt innerhalb der Kirche verloren gehen? — Ist nicht sehr viel Namenchristentum unter uns? Laßt das Gewissen reden!

2.

a. B. 2. Wach auf und stärke! Der größte Teil der Gemeinde war tot; ein anderer Teil lag im Sterben! Ihr Glaubenslicht flackerte nur noch. Sie waren am „Entschlafen“! Der Pastor soll aufwachen und alle seine Kraft und Zeit den Toten und im Sterben Liegenden zur Erweckung widmen. Er hat keine Zeit, Mötoria zu treiben. Das Gesetz muß donnern und blitzen; die vom Satan ihnen aufgesetzte Brille muß von den Augen gerissen werden. Aus ihrer Sicherheit und Selbstbetrug müssen sie aufgeschreckt werden mit Macht. Sie müssen hören, daß all ihr Gottesdienst, ihr Hören und Beten, und ihr Eifer Gott ein Greuel ist, weil es bei ihnen nur Form und Schein ist, weil ihr Herz nichts davon spürt, weil Glaube und Liebe zu Gott fehlen. — Auch in unsern Gemeinden sind geistlich Tote und Sterbende. Wie kalt und herzlos ist doch der Gottesdienst so vieler! Wie viele sind nur Hörer, aber nicht Täter des Wortes! Wie viele trösten sich damit, daß sie Gemeindeglieder und Kirchgänger sind! Da trösten sich wohl auch Pastor und Gemeinde mit dem äußerlich guten Schein! Nicht so! Der Pastor und die Lebenden müssen wachen und stärken — oder es ist alles verloren. Das Wort muß auf den Plan, öffentlich und sonderlich! Die toten Glieder müssen abgeschnitten werden, sie verderben sonst den ganzen Leib. Jetzt ist die Zeit; laßt uns wachen! Satan hat unser begehrt, er will uns chloroformieren und schmerzlos töten.

b. B. 3. Herzensbuße. Nur durch Buße kann neues Leben entstehen. Wir müssen mit denen zu Sardes denken an die große Gnade, die wir empfangen haben, an das, was Gott uns in seinem Wort sagt. Da sagt er, daß nur die wahren Gläubigen seine Kinder und Glieder der Gemeinde der Heiligen sind. Alle Gläubigen, aber auch nur die Gläubigen, gehören dazu. Das Reich Gottes ist inwendig, kommt nicht mit äußeren Gebärden, mit äußerem Schein, mit Scheintätigkeit und Gepränge. — Ja, wir müssen gewiß klagen, wenn wir uns und unsere Gemeinden ansehen: Lied 166, 1. Noch ist die Gnadenzeit, Zeit zur Umkehr. Ach, wir wollen Buße tun! Wir haben es so sehr nötig. Der Herr warnt uns so eindringlich.

c. B. 3b. Die Drohung. Werden wir nicht Buße tun, sondern im Namenschristentum beharren, so wird der Herr plötzlich, wie ein Dieb, unerwartet, über unsere Gemeinde und Synode kommen und uns wegwerfen. Nicht die Größe, nicht der gute Name, den wir haben, wird uns retten. Nur Herzensbuße, indem wir uns selbst kraft des Heiligen Geistes aufraffen und uns vor den Riß stellen, das einreißende Namenschristentum aufhalten, ausschalten. Geistliches Leben in unsere Gemeinden bringen durchs Wort!

3.

a. B. 4. 5. Die übrigen nach der Wahl. Doch, Gott sei Dank, auch in dieser toten Gemeinde gab es noch übrige nach der Wahl. Es waren noch etliche wahre Christen da, die die Kleider der Gerechtigkeit, die sie in der Taufe angezogen, nicht besudelt hatten. Diese sollen mit ihm, dem Herrn, in Herrlichkeit wandeln. Sie sollen unter der Zahl derer sein, die in weißen Kleidern vor ihm stehen, aus allen Völkern. Ihr Name soll nicht wie der Name so vieler in ihrer toten Gemeinde aus dem Lebensbuch getilgt werden. Vor dem Vater und den Engeln will er sie als die Seinen anerkennen.

b. B. 6. Der Weckruf. Hört es, ihr Toten! Des Herrn Wort will euch wie den Lazarus wieder aufwecken. Ihr Sterbenden, des Herrn Wort kann euch neue Lebenskraft geben! Ihr Sicherer, hört: nicht äußere Zugehörigkeit zu dieser Gemeinde macht euch zu Gottes Kindern, sondern Herzensbuße, Reue und Glaube! Ihr Treuen, stärkt die Schwachen und wißt, daß die ewige Herrlichkeit euch Beharrenden bevorsteht. Lied 436, 1.

R. Piehler.

Literatur.

Synodalhandbuch der Ev.-Luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio und andern Staaten. Fünfte, völlig umgearbeitete Auflage. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. Preis: 90 Cts.

Das Resultat ungeheurer Arbeit liegt hier vor. Ein paar Blide in das Buch genügen, den Leser davon zu überzeugen, daß die Revision, resp. Herstellung dieses Werkes mühsame Detailarbeit erforderte. Dem Komitee, besonders D. Fürbringer, gebührt der aufrichtige Dank der Synode. Das ausführliche, von P. E. Eckhardt besorgte Register erhöht den Wert des Buches. Möge es bald weit und breit zu finden sein!

A.

Special Problems of the Christian Day-School. By Paul T. Buszin, C. H. Seltz, A. A. Grossmann, Th. Kuehnert, and Paul E. Kretzmann. Concordia Teachers' Library, Vol. 8. Bound in cloth. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. Price, net, \$1.00, plus postage.

No one will complain that we have a superabundance of books dealing with the peculiar tasks and problems of our Christian day-schools. While books on education, viewed as to general aspects, are indeed more than legion and a Federal law prohibiting the printing of further books on this subject within the next ten years might almost seem justified, the case is different with regard to works which are designed to further the interests of our parochial schools. The contents of the volume under review will be found informing and important. The book consists of five parts. Part 1,

written by Superintendent Paul T. Buszin, treats of "The Status of the Christian Day-school"; Part 2, from the pen of Rev. C. H. Seltz, is super-scribed, "The Christian Day-school Plant"; Part 3, furnished by Superintendent A. A. Grossmann, treats of "Present-day Tendencies and Their Influence on Our Schools"; Part 4 is written by Superintendent Theo. Kuehnert, whose theme is: "Our Schools in Their Relation to Other Educational Agencies"; Part 5 is contributed by Dr. Kretzmann, who describes the "Up-to-Date Christian Teacher." May the book be given a warm welcome in the circles for which it is intended! A.

Physical Training for Public Speakers. By *Martin S. Sommer*. Order from the author or from Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. Price, 65 cts.

This excellent little book wishes to serve as a guide especially to theological students and the clergy in their efforts to attend to the physical training which as public speakers they cannot do without. It is interspersed with blank pages for additional notes. The author, Professor Sommer, instructor in public speaking at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, says very well in the preface: "The physical training of the public speaker is neither the most important, nor is it the most laborious or extended part of a public speaker's course; but that attention which it actually requires it should receive." The helpfulness of the manual will immediately appear if I mention the titles of some of the fourteen chapters: Vocal Organs; Breathing; Articulation; How May One Avoid the Pulpit-tone? Some welcome selections for practise are appended. May the booklet experience a wide sale! A.

Die rechte Weltanschauung. Vortrag, gehalten auf der Delegatensynode 1923 von *F. Pieper*.

Following the Faith of Our Fathers. A paper read at the convention of the Missouri Synod in Fort Wayne in June, 1923, by *Prof. F. Bente*. Beide Vorträge sind zu beziehen vom Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. Preis: Je 10 Cts.

Zwei berühmte Referate! sagt unser Verlagshaus mit Recht. Sie sind ein treffliches Mittel, Fremde mit unserer Stellung bekannt zu machen. Wir Missionair selbst aber sollten sie studieren, um unsere Lehre von neuem an der Schrift zu prüfen und unsere Erkenntnis der Wahrheit zu vertiefen. A.

The Proof-Texts of the Catechism with a Practical Commentary. Vol. II. By *Louis Wessel*, Professor at Concordia College, Springfield, Ill. Order from Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.

It is not necessary to give a long characterization of Vol. II of this work, because Vol. I has had a wide circulation and has been in the hands of preachers and teachers for several years. While Vol. I presented discussions which had appeared in the *Theological Quarterly*, most of the material found in Vol. II has not as yet been before the public. Vol. II concludes the series of expositions of the proof-texts found in our synodical Catechism, treating those texts which relate to the last four Chief Parts. I should like to urge all ministers and teachers to purchase and study these two volumes. Professor Wessel, who has held the chair of English Literature at our Springfield seminary for a number of years, writes in lucid, crisp, and idiomatic English, and no one will read his book without being benefited in point of language. What is more important, the exegetical material is both doctrinally sound and stimulating, usually opening long vistas of thought to the reader. From the homiletical view-point it is hardly possible to overestimate these studies. Many of the proof-texts examined here occur in the regular Gospel-lessons of the church-year. Others are of such a nature that the pastor will choose them as texts in a series of sermons on so-called free texts, — all of which at once suggests the usefulness of these volumes to the preacher. The high value these studies possess for the conscientious teacher, who endeavors to make his pupils see the Scripturalness of our Lutheran doc-

trines, needs but be mentioned to become at once apparent. Vol. I is still selling for \$2.00. It is announced, however, that the price will soon be raised. Vol. II is offered for the low price of \$1.60. On account of the high cost of production the edition is limited. A.

Home Department Questions on Primary Leaflets. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.

Here the means is provided to reach such little children as live at too great a distance to attend the Sunday-school. The question sheets are to accompany the *Primary Leaflets* of the Concordia Publishing House Sunday-school Series. They are sold only in complete sets of 8 lessons to the set. Price, 5 cts. per set. A.

Ein rechter Freundesbrief. Ein wirklich an einen vormaligen Lehrer und jetziges Glied der Elks geschriebener Brief. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. Preis: 5 Cts.; Duzend: 48 Cts.; 100: \$3.33 und Porto.

Ein Abdruck eines im „Lutheraner“ erschienenen Artikels, der hoffentlich auch als Pamphlet gute Dienste tun wird. A.

My Savior Lives! A Complete Program for Children's Easter Services. By H. R. Charlé. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. Price: Single copies, 5 cts.; dozen, 50 cts.; 100, \$3.50, plus postage.

This service consists of hymns, songs, recitations, and dialogs. The material given is very appealing. A feature that will facilitate the memorizing of the text is that it is entirely in verse. Sample copies will gladly be furnished at request and special prices quoted. A.

Our Missions in India.

VANIYAMBADI.

It was pointed out in former articles that our first missionaries in India were sent there with the instruction to open up work in hitherto unoccupied areas. Thus the sainted Rev. Naether chose Krishnagiri, in the Salem District of the Madras Presidency, while Rev. Mohn settled in Ambur and Rev. Kellerbauer in Barugur. Upon the accession of Rev. R. Freche to the number of our first missionaries from the Leipzig Lutheran Mission in 1898, Vaniyambadi was chosen after a thorough canvass of the North Arcot and Salem Districts. Vaniyambadi and Ambur are in the North Arcot District.

Vaniyambadi lies on the Madras and Southern Maratta Railway, on the line running from Madras to Bangalore. It is 122 miles from Madras, 10 miles from Ambur, 22 miles from Barugur, and 32 miles from Krishnagiri. The inhabitants number about 20,000, of whom 60 per cent. are said to be Mohammedans. But the people of the surrounding villages are all Hindus.

Vaniyambadi is quite a trading-center, and numerous tanneries dot the immediate neighborhood of the town and are very conspicuous by their odor. The Palar (Milk River) flows through the town, dividing into three branches. When in 1903 or 1904 the dam at the Kolar Gold Fields (fifty miles up the river) broke, a flood lasting some ten hours played havoc with the houses and huts of the people and caused

great loss of life and property. The streets of the town are narrow, crooked, and filthy. There is no water or drainage system, and it is due, no doubt, to the penetrating rays of the hot Indian sun, which kill the disease germs, that plague, cholera, and other contagious diseases do not call for a greater number of victims during the year. There has been no plague here for the last four or five years; we have had only isolated cases, which were imported. Cholera, however, was here in 1922 and 1923. The able and well-directed efforts of the medical officers to stamp out the disease are nullified by the Gosha system of the Mohammedans, which keeps the women in absolute seclusion, without fresh air or light.

When Rev. Freche came to Vaniyambadi, he found a passable bungalow to live in on the other side of the town, for which he had to pay thirty rupees a month; but later the rent was raised to fifty rupees — an outrageous price. But the Oriental everywhere has the gift of extracting money for value not received, be it labor or merchandise. So the first thing to do was to look for a suitable place which might be bought. Rev. Freche succeeded in securing from the government a plot of ground of 19.7 acres free from all charges. This plot of ground forms the present mission compound at Vaniyambadi. It is two miles from the railway station, along the road which leads to Bangalore. It is an ideal place to live in because it lies on an elevation, and the congestion of the town and its concomitant perfumes with the noise and *tamasha* (procession, show) during the days of the idol festivals do not pester the missionary. The only drawback is that the 84-foot well does not yield enough water; in fact, it is of no use at all during the greater part of the year. The water question here has been the main cause of worries of the missionaries as well as of the Home Board from the beginning. A number of women coolies carry the water up the hill from wells a full quarter of a mile away in pots they balance on their heads. Part of the expense is borne by the missionary and part by the Home Board. The missionary conference will take up this "burning" question for discussion at its next conference. The compound was bare of all trees, but some were planted by Rev. Freche. The soil — well, it is practically rock, and the whole compound hardly boasts of enough soil even for a flower-pot. All earth has to be carted up. Growing flowers, trees, and vegetables proves a man's optimism here.

Rev. Freche had such optimism, and the number of trees on the compound now bear witness to this fact. But his optimism showed itself more in another field of sowing and planting. From the beginning he was diligent about the Lord's business, and although he writes in some of his earlier reports that there was not much visible fruit, still he went on preaching the Word. From the available records it appears that the first baptism of converts took place on Pentecost in

1901, when a family of seven souls was baptized. On September 29 of the same year five more baptisms were recorded.

At first services were conducted in the study of the missionary. When the attendance outgrew the capacity of this room, an outhouse, which had served as the dwelling of the missionary while he was building the bungalow, was converted into a chapel with an altar and pulpit of masonry and even a small tower in which a bell was hung. This was the first chapel in the neighborhood of Vaniyambadi. It attracted many outsiders, who thus also heard of the way to life through faith in Christ Jesus.

Rev. Freche conducted regular street-preaching. He had organized a little band, composed of his two oldest boys, two or three teachers, and boys from the boarding-schools, who went with him on his preaching-tours and by their singing and music attracted the villagers, gathered a crowd, and helped proclaim the Gospel.

In 1906 we also find a boarding-school for girls on the compound. Village schools were conducted in a number of villages. Some of these had to be abandoned again after a number of years. There was absolutely no response to the Gospel-message by the people. At the present time five village schools are conducted in the Vaniyambadi circuit: in Thorayeri, Govindapuram, Konamedu, Valayampattu, and Nadupattarai. The number of children enrolled is about 150, sometimes more, sometimes less. In Vaniyambadi proper is a complete elementary school with eight classes and five teachers; it has an enrolment of 90 boys. A year ago the enrolment was nearly 150. A Hindu teacher, who was dismissed for good reasons, published an article in a Tamil paper, stating that the pupils were compelled to sing and pray and read the Bible in our school and were taught to cease worshipping Siva and Vishnu; in addition, low-caste boys were being admitted. Hereupon the number dropped to 60 practically overnight. The school is picking up again, however, but it has not yet become the factor for evangelizing that the missionary would like to see it.

In 1913 Rev. Freche was privileged to dedicate his first village chapel in Thorayeri. At present there are 60 souls in Thorayeri confessing Jesus; 30 of these are communicants. In Govindapuram there are 62 souls and 30 communicants; in Konamedu, 8 souls and 3 communicants; in Valayampattu, 13 souls and 5 communicants.

Rev. Freche labored here for eighteen years. In 1916 he returned to America, where he served our Synod as pastor and in other capacities until the Lord called him to the home above. His end came in 1923. He was a faithful servant, filled with sympathy for the unhappy people of this country. In eternity he will, no doubt, see more fruit of his labors than the Lord vouchsafed him to see here.

During the twenty-five years that Vaniyambadi has been occupied by the Missouri mission the following men have worked here: Rev. A.

Huebener, who had charge of the station while Rev. Freche was on furlough in 1904—05; Rev. F. Forster, who built the second bungalow here in 1903. From 1916 to 1921 the station was without a missionary. Rev. E. Ludwig was to be stationed here, but the Lord, in His unsearchable wisdom, called him home in 1919. During these years the missionaries from Ambur did what was in their power to keep the work going. In March, 1921, the undersigned came here. Rev. E. A. Noffke, now in Krishnagiri, lived here, too, till 1922, spending his time in learning the language and repairing the second bungalow. Rev. F. Blaess lived here since June of last year, also learning the language and working his field on the other side of Ambur from here. He will remove to Ambur next month.

On the 6th of this month Rev. A. Brux arrived here. But his work is to be among the Mohammedan population and is an entirely new work in our mission. May the Lord grant him great success in his work!

The undersigned preaches at two places every Sunday, once or twice during the week in the chapels, instructs the catechumens, and supervises the teachers and schools. It is a hard task to work in the face of strong opposition on the part of Hindus and Mohammedans, and it is still harder to be patient with ever-recurring weaknesses of our Christians. I know that Rev. Freche's heart was often near the breaking point when one of his converts relapsed. Then there is the abject poverty of the people, their nakedness and starvation. What are you going to do to help us solve our difficulties?

The work is hard, but it is also a blessed work, and the undersigned has been privileged to experience the power of the Word of Life when he baptized converts, comforted the sick, and reproved the erring. It is his prayer that God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, may grant him His Holy Spirit for the purpose of making him ever more fit and willing to be about the Lord's business.

Vaniyambadi, January 22, 1924.

J. HARMS.

TRIVANDRUM.

Travancore, one of the most picturesque portions of India, occupies the southern end of the west coast, extending more than 150 miles northwest of Cape Comorin. Within its area of 7,091 square miles it offers a remarkable variety of scenery, climate, and products. Its coast, lined with hundreds of thousands of cocoa and areca palms, the lagoons and rivers, bordered with dense tropical jungle, the broad belt farther inland with its unending changes of hills and valleys, towering jack-trees, and terraced rice-fields, and the hill country, rising to a height of 8,000 feet, contain much that is of beauty and of value. Its wide range of elevation and its abundant rainfall produce climatic conditions very similar to those of the island of Ceylon, where, as the poet has it, "every prospect pleases."

A large portion of the hill country of Travancore is still designated on maps as "unexplored territory." Being inhabited by wild elephants, tigers, leopards, bears, bison, and various kinds of deer, it is a veritable hunters' paradise.

The trade is large and increasing. The chief exports are copra, coir, and other cocoanut products, peppers, tea, sugar, areca-nuts, timber, and hides. Travancore is one of the well-nigh seven hundred native states in India ruled by their own native princes and enjoying the protection of the British Empire. For this protection Travancore pays Great Britain annually the sum of 80,000 pounds sterling, or \$320,000. The military establishment consists of 1,360 infantry, 61 cavalry, and 30 artillery with 6 guns.

Trivandrum, a city of about 60,000 inhabitants, differs from the other towns in the state not only in size, but also as to character. Being the capital, it contains a large number of public buildings, some of which are the state headquarters of various government departments, such as education, police, and public works, while others bear witness to the wide range of interest shown by the present rajah as well as by predecessors, as the Museum in the Public Gardens and the School of Arts, where pottery and ivory carving are practised and taught.

Our Trivandrum district, of all our mission-fields in India the most recently occupied, lies within a square of four hundred square miles, with Trivandrum as its southeastern corner. This field differs from the older two, the so-called Northern, near Madras, and the Nagercoil, with respect to language. While the older two districts are in the Tamil country, Trivandrum lies in the Malayalam-language area. Malayalam, like Tamil, is one of the Dravidian languages, and is said to date from the ninth century A. D. It is the language of the Malabar coast, used by about 7,000,000 people. It has one dialect, Yerava, spoken in Coorg. It is different from Tamil principally in that it has dropped all the personal endings of verbs, and that the words borrowed from Sanskrit are particularly numerous. The characters used in writing Malayalam are quite different from those employed in Tamil. The Malayalam alphabet has a far greater wealth of symbols for various sounds than the English alphabet, having 18 vowels and 37 consonants. But these separate vowel and consonant signs are not commonly used in written words, for in these the unit is the syllable, not the letter. One, two, or still more consonants with one vowel usually form a syllable and are written in a single combination sign indicating in its parts the letters of which it is composed; and these parts are different from the single letters for which they stand. Counting all the single letters and the combinations, except some of the very rare signs, we find that the language has as many as 571 letters. The writing runs from left to right, and each line comes under the foregoing one, but while usually the letters are

joined together side by side, there are many cases in which as many as four letters are written one under the other in combination signs.

Our mission-work in the Malayalam-language area was first begun at the request of two men of that country, Arul-Anandam (*pr.* arul-ahnandam, "the high joy of grace") and Canchanam (*pr.* kahnjanam, "pure gold"), who for several years made frequent visits to our missionaries in Nagercoil and begged them to come and begin the instruction and take upon themselves the spiritual care of several hundred people in the neighborhood of Trivandrum. For a time it was impossible for our missionaries to heed the call, as they did not have enough men to work their own field as thoroughly as they wished. But in January, 1912, when their number had been increased to five, Rev. H. Nau was sent to begin the work in Trivandrum. He lived in a small rented house in a part of Trivandrum called Nandankodu and made almost daily journeys in his little pony-cart to four villages twelve to eighteen miles away: Puliyoorkonam, Puthukulankara, Kurungalloor, and Kutichel. The two leaders mentioned above were employed to aid in the religious instruction of adults and children, and a few men from among the catechumens who had learned to read and write were employed as teachers for the little parish-schools which were started in all these congregations. Every Saturday all the Indian mission-workers would meet at the house in Nandankodu for a lesson with Rev. Nau, receiving instruction in the fundamentals of the Christian faith, as well as material and special practical directions, for their work in the following week.

In autumn of 1912 Rev. J. Harms entered the work. He began to study the language and to familiarize himself with the customs, habits, and living conditions of the people among whom he was to labor; and three-fourths of a year later, when he was able to take part in the village work, two new villages, Kanakodu and Antikonam, were added to the other four. While the people in all the churches founded so far were of the same caste, Pariahs, a congregation consisting of people from the Shanar caste (toddy-drawers) was founded at Arianadu at about this time. In June, 1913, Rev. F. R. Zucker, who had been working in Nagercoil since 1910, among people speaking Tamil, but had contracted typhoid fever and had just been at Kodaikanal to recover his health and strength, was added to the force in Trivandrum and, after a few months of study of the language, took up work in two near villages, Chullimanoor and Chalaikonam, and soon after also in Puthukulankara.

Rev. O. A. Ehlers entered the work in November, 1913, and when he had mastered the language sufficiently, he undertook the care of two new villages, Timarichel and Madattikonam. In May, 1914, Rev. Nau left the field, going on home furlough, whereupon the work was redistributed among the remaining three men. A few months

before that the mission compound had been bought, and Rev. Nau had finished building the bungalow that he hoped to live in after his return from home-leave in autumn, 1915; but, unfortunately, in consequence of the war in Europe, he has not been able to return. Rev. Harms left in January, 1918; he, too, unfortunately, could not return from furlough until three years later.

Rev. O. Ehlers returned home on furlough in 1922 and has since resigned. In 1921 our missionary forces in India were augmented considerably, and Trivandrum benefited as well as the other fields. At present the following missionaries are stationed in or near Trivandrum: Revs. A. Fritze, R. Jank, P. Kauffeld, G. Oberheu, and F. R. Zucker.

In 1915 a boarding establishment and lower and higher grade elementary (or vernacular) school was started, and both were developed from year to year, the boarding establishment to a capacity of about forty boys with two permanent buildings, and the lower grade vernacular school—first to seventh class—with some 120 pupils. Later on a girls' boarding-school was added to our establishment. With the beginning of the work at Konni a new caste was added to our Lutheran community, these people being from the caste called Puleyar. The unification of these various peoples of Pariah, Shanar, and Puleyar origin, doubtless originally belonging to so many different races, into one Christian brotherhood is the interesting and difficult task confronting the people of this district. The accomplishment of this purpose will be strong proof of the regenerating power of the Gospel.

Of late, plans have been made to invade the territory of still another tribe, the Vedas, who live in jungles quite remote from the highways of travel and commerce.

The number of stations or villages in the Trivandrum region where work is being done by us at present is 22. The following statistics may be of interest: In the boys' boarding-school there are 38 inmates; in the girls' boarding school, 10; the total number of pupils in our schools is 690. The number of souls in our charge is 2,333; of catechumens, 1,220; of baptized Christians, 671.

In order that we may realize something of the wonderful power of the Word of God, let us see what it has already done for the people of this our youngest district. Much of what is said will, of course, be applicable to the people of our other districts as well. The great majority of the people gained so far in our Trivandrum field, being so-called "low-caste" people, were not permitted to join the people of higher castes even in worshipping the same gods, the traditional gods of Hinduism, but had to content themselves with devils as their gods. Unlike the Hindus proper, these low-caste men and women did not believe in the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul, but held

that the soul of every human being which dies is changed into a demon, or devil, who hovers about the living and exerts his influence, mostly evil, in many ways, such as bringing on disease and epidemics, persecuting and killing his victims. The foundation of their religion and the mainspring of all their efforts put forth in ceremonies and offerings was fear. They believed that the spirits of people who have died a violent death are particularly dangerous. When a theft or any other crime had been committed, but the guilty person was not known, a devil-dance was often arranged for the purpose of finding out the culprit. The devil-dancer in his weird costume sacrificed a fowl, drank a little of its blood and more than a little of palm-wine, and began to dance. His movements, at first only a slight tremor, gradually rose to wild contortions, and the whole village, gathered about him, supposed that the devil he called had entered and taken possession of him. What he said now was believed to be the revelation of the devil. Suddenly he would call upon some person in the circle about him to confess the crime, which that person usually did. The devil-dancer had, of course, been informed about any suspicious circumstances connected with the crime and watched the expression of the faces about him as the dance went on, and on the degrees of composure or anxiety betrayed by the suspects he based a guess as to the guilty one. The devil-dancer had a large stock of paraphernalia, things he used to discover unknown facts, to injure enemies, and to protect paying patrons.

Most of our converts had never had an opportunity to learn to read and write. Naturally they knew very little outside the boundaries of their own village life in rice-field and jungle. But most of them do not impress one as incapable of learning anything. Their ignorance and superstition seem to be altogether due to isolation and powerful, stupid customs. Their original occupations are few and simple, *viz.*, agriculture in wet and dry soil and mat-weaving. Both men and women were employed in the rice-fields of the Sudras (higher castes) as day-laborers, a man earning a daily wage of about ten cents and a woman six cents. And in the agricultural slack season the men — this applies to those of Pariah descent only — would go to the hills and cut reeds, which the women then split and weave into baskets, mats, and winnowing-fans.

Largely, perhaps, as a consequence of this poverty they were poorly nourished, not strong, not very cleanly, and they easily fell a prey to the frequent epidemic diseases, such as cholera and small-pox. For recovery from all diseases, from colds to leprosy, they used to depend on amulets and medicines concocted out of various roots and herbs by illiterate native quacks.

But for a great many of the people in the congregations round about Trivandrum such a description, quite correct ten years ago,

would no longer be true in most respects. In many cases, not only of men or of boys in the higher classes of our school, but also of illiterate women in the villages, I have been surprised to find that they have acquired a great amount of knowledge and a sound understanding of Christian doctrine. They gave up their devil-dances together with the related practises of witchcraft and sorcery, learned to believe in, and pray to, the living God, and confessed their faith, not only with their lips, but with their lives as well. If we had more space, we might tell the touching story of blind Johannan, intelligent and ambitious to learn in spite of his handicap, eagerly teaching seeing children the Catechism and Bible-stories, and dying a triumphant death in the influenza epidemic. He is still spoken of as a model Christian by men twice and three times his age. Or we might tell of the self-sacrificing care given to the sick in those trying times. The missionary work in this field has resulted in many by-products, which, while not on a level with our main purpose, are nevertheless gratifying. The disagreeable uncleanness is gradually disappearing, throughout the congregations the people take on a cleaner and more respectable appearance; the boarding-school boys take their daily bath — not under compulsion, but they have formed the habit — and wash their clothes at least once a week. The general health of the people is much improved. They rise in an economic way; many of our families have acquired a small plot of ground and work more regularly. Almost all children, not only boys, but girls as well, now get at least an elementary education. The people wear more clothes, little children, too, are dressed, and the clothes of the women now are modest and sufficient. In times of disease and epidemic the people now almost invariably take medicine, and do so intelligently; and when surgical operations are necessary, they submit themselves to such treatment and save themselves much unnecessary suffering. They have consented to some very necessary changes in their marriage customs, and family life among them has become decidedly more Christian and happier for all concerned.

Thus changes for the better are numerous and unmistakable and gratifying. But we are still far from having reached our goal. While the few thousand people who have profited by our work are still urgently in need of guidance and sympathetic care, there are so many, many thousands who have not yet seen the light. We must implore all our friends at home not to relax their efforts in behalf of our work or grow weary in well-doing, but to redouble their efforts and enlist new friends for the cause, so that there may be a growing circle of friends with growing knowledge and growing faith and growing love to support our growing mission-fields not only with their contributions, but with their fervent, effectual prayer as well.

Trivandrum, South India.

F. R. ZUCKER.